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# THE WISDOM OF THE UPANISADS

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BY

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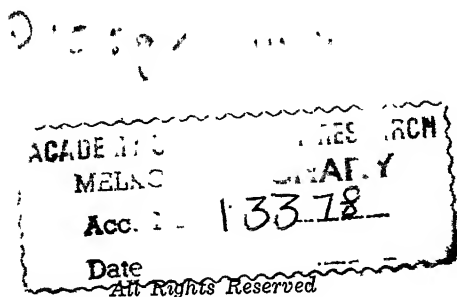
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## PREFACE

This work is largely based on the Honorary Readership lectures delivered by me under the auspices of the University of Madras. Its humble aim is to present the essential features of the Philosophy of the *Upaniṣads* in the light of *Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta*, which is not very well known either in the East or in the West. The knowledge of the *Vedas* ripens into *Vedānta*, the wisdom of the *Upaniṣads*, but it is often wrongly identified with Śaṅkara *Vedānta*, although the systems of Rāmānuja and Madhva are equally logical and philosophical. Rāmānuja did not, like Śaṅkara, write any commentary as such on the principal *Upaniṣads*; but his *Śrī Bhāṣya* and *Vedārtha Saṅgraha*, the gloss on *Śrī Bhāṣya* known as *Śrutapra-kāśika* and the Raṅgarāmānuja *Bhāṣya* on the *Upaniṣads* are clear and critical expositions of *Viśiṣṭādvaita* and serve the purpose of a direct *Bhāṣya* on the principal *Upaniṣads*.

In addition to the vast literature in English on the *Upaniṣads* consisting of translations, selections and essays, there are many systematic expositions of their chief tenets from the *Advaitic* standpoint by modern thinkers, Western as well as Eastern, unsympathetic as well as appreciative. Among the unsympathetic interpretations may be included the works of Gough, Slater, Prof. McKenzie, Dr. Macnicol and Dr. Urquhart. Gough, perhaps the most learned of these writers, regards Śaṅkara as the greatest expositor of the *Upaniṣads*.

MaxMüller thinks that orthodox *Vedānta* supports the illusion theory and Deussen also is convinced that the illusion theory is the fundamental doctrine of *Vedānta*. Dr. Radhakrishnan in his "Philosophy of the Upanishads" is of the opinion that they tend towards non-dualism or *Advaitism*. Prof. Hiriyanna is also of the opinion that monistic idealism is their main teaching. "A Constructive Survey of the Upanishads" by Prof. R. D. Ranade has its consummation and goal in monistic mysticism. Prof. Das Gupta in his scholarly account thereon in his "History of Indian Philosophy" does not seem to view with favour their absolutistic interpretation. Thibaut, after a thorough comparative study of the commentaries of Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja on the *Vedānta Sūtras*, comes to the conclusion that the *Sūtras* support Rāmānuja. He thinks, however, that the *Upaniṣads* favour Śaṅkara's view. It will thus be seen that most modern expositors of *Vedānta* identify it with *Advaita*, and it is therefore necessary to bring out the tenets of the other schools like *Viśiṣṭādvaita* to form a correct estimate of the whole position.

The method followed in this work is a systematic formulation of the *Upaniṣadic* thought under the well known headings of Epistemology, Ontology, Cosmology, Psychology, Ethics and Eschatology or theories of *mukti*. It is a synthetic presentation of the essentials of the *Upaniṣadic* Philosophy of Religion whose keynote is struck in the opening and concluding portions of the *Vedānta Sūtras*, namely, that existence and value are one and that Brahman is the ultimate ground of all existents and the supreme goal of all experience. The *Upaniṣads*, the

*Sūtras* and the *Gītā* are integrally related and their teachings are identical though they may stress the mystical, metaphysical and moral aspects respectively, of the same *Vedic* truths.

It is my pleasant duty to thank all my friends who helped me in the publication of this work. My thanks are due to the authorities of the Madras University for permission to bring out my lectures in book form. I should specially express my sincere gratitude to the Rajah of Pithapuram for the generous and enthusiastic support he has given me in the preparation of this work and some other books in the series. I am deeply indebted to my friends, Messrs. M. R. Rajagopala Iyengar, G. K. Rangaswami Iyengar, K. R. Appalachariar, A. N. Krishna Iyengar, K. R. Sarma and R. C. Srinivasa Raghavan for offering valuable suggestions and looking through the proofs. It is a great pleasure to me to acknowledge the expeditious and excellent execution and printing of the work by the G. S. Press, Madras.

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P. N. SRINIVASACHARI



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# THE WISDOM OF THE UPANIṢADS

## INTRODUCTION

The *Upaniṣads* reveal the most sublime truths of Indian philosophy and the highest values of spiritual life. The persistent problems of metaphysics, ethics and religion dealing, respectively, with what a man can know, ought to do and may hope for are clearly set forth in the *Upaniṣads* and the solutions offered by them are stable and satisfactory. The foundations of the orthodox schools of Indian philosophy are contained in them and even heterodox systems are anxious to trace their ancestry to them. They are the source and sustenance of all *Vedāntic darśanas*. Strictly speaking, the term '*Vedānta*' applies only to the *Upaniṣads*. In them *Vedic* knowledge ripens into *Vedāntic* wisdom. All branches of even secular knowledge have their spiritual background in the supreme *vidyā* known as *Brahmavidyā*. By knowing Brahman everything in the world is known ; but if a man knows all things and does not know their spiritual source, he is still ignorant. It is the *Upaniṣads* that lead a man from ignorance to wisdom and from misery to eternal happiness. It is in *Vedānta* that theoretical speculation and practical spiritual experience go together. Metaphysical enquiry into Reality is neither cut off from moral life nor sundered from mysticism. The *Taittirīya-Upaniṣad* affirms that he who knows Brahman attains the highest end of life. This sums up the wisdom of *Vedānta* and it means that Brahman, the metaphysical ground of all beings, is also the goal of all

moral and spiritual endeavour. The *mumukṣu* or seeker after Brahman not only thinks reality, but lives it and realises it. Then are all his doubts solved, all bonds broken and he attains eternal peace and bliss. The *vidvān*, as he is rightly called, communicates his *jñāna* to others and, in this manner, an unbroken continuity of tradition has been maintained from time immemorial. It is, therefore, no wonder that western philosophers like Max Muller who have made a masterly comparative study of philosophy and religion glorify *Vedānta* by saying that in the *Upaniṣads* which are the sources of *Vedānta*, human speculation has reached its very acme. Schopenhauer who extols Plato and Kant as the best exponents of western philosophy comes to the conclusion that, in the whole world, there is no study so beneficial and elevating as that of the *Upaniṣads*. To a student of *Vedānta* in particular who is brought up in the *Vedāntic* tradition, the *Upaniṣads* are a spiritual heritage and treasure and he cannot afford to lose it even if he gains the whole world instead.

The *Upaniṣads* are the concluding portion of the four *Vedas*, and the canonical or principal *Upaniṣads* are usually considered to be twelve. They are : the *Īśa*, the *Kaṭha*, the *Taittirīya*, the *Brhadāraṇyaka*, the *Svetāśvatara*, the *Praśna*, the *Muṇḍaka*, the *Māṇḍūkya*, the *Aitareya*, the *Kauṣītaki*, the *Chāndogya* and the *Kena*. Of these twelve, the first five belong to the *Yajur Veda*, the next three to the *Atharva Veda*, the next two to the *R̥g Veda* and the last two to the *Sāma Veda*. The *Īśa* is so called because of its well-known opening word *Īśāvāsyam* which declares the immanence of Brahman in all beings. The *Kaṭha* begins with the immortal

discourse between Yama, the god of Death, and young Naciketas, and teaches sublime ethical truths like self-reverence and self-sovereignty. The *Taittirīya* contains the famous story of Bhṛgu obtaining the mystic knowledge of Brahman as supremely blissful. In the *Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, Yājñavalkya expounds to his wife the nature of the immortal self, defines Brahman as the Inner Ruler of all beings and gives a psychological account of the three states of consciousness. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* provides the largest number of topics or *viśaya vākyas* for exposition in the *Vedānta Sūtras*, of which the chief are the *Sadvidyā* dealing with Brahman as the *sat*, the *Bhūmavidyā* defining the nature of Brahman as the infinitely blissful and the *Daharavidyā* which teaches the in-dwelling of Brahman in the hearts of all beings. The *Muṇḍaka* distinguishes between two *vidyās*, the higher and the lower, and employs the celebrated simile of two birds on the same tree to bring out the relation between the finite self and the Supreme Self. The *Māṇḍūkya* defines the nature of Brahman as *praṇava* and that of the state of *turīya*. The *Kauṣṭhikī* explains *Upaniṣadic* eschatology, the value and destiny of the individual self and the glory of *Paramapada*. The *Śvetāśvatara* expounds the nature of *pradhāna*, *puruṣa* and *Īśvara* and their distinction and the need for self-surrender to God and His grace. All the *Upaniṣads*, however, teach the same central truth, that Brahman is the source of the world and the supreme end of life. The *mumukṣu*, who seeks Brahman as the All-Self, sees Brahman intuitively, becomes a *mukta* and imparts his wisdom to others also who seek it. *Upaniṣadic* wisdom is not an esoteric doctrine meant for elect souls and monopolised by them, but is a rich spiritual treasure

which is accessible to all who would undergo the necessary discipline. It is not secret but sacred in the sense that only the pure in heart can attain the peace that passeth all understanding. The value of the *Upaniṣads* consists not in merely accepting the formula of *śānti* and memorising it, but in living the *Upaniṣadic* life and realising its importance.

Though the essential teaching of the *Upaniṣads* is the apprehension of Brahman (*Brahmajñāna*) and the attainment of His bliss (*Brahmānanda*), fundamental differences arise when attempts are made to determine the exact meaning of the nature of Brahman and of *mukti*. So conflicting appear the texts in the various *Upaniṣads*, and sometimes in the same *Upaniṣad*, that many modern interpreters despair of reconciling them and are driven to the conclusion that they have no coherence and that, even if they admit of co-ordination, they present a variety of systems. The *Upaniṣads* contain texts to support every type of philosophy and religion—monism, non-dualism, pantheism, theism and pluralism. Monism is said to be expounded in the passages, 'Thou art that', 'I am Brahman', and non-dualism by the *Śruti* "There was one only without a second," "There is here no diversity whatsoever," "From death to death goes he who sees any difference here," "Where there is duality as it were, there one sees the other." That Brahman is *nirguṇa* is favoured by the text, "Brahman is without form or qualities. Brahman is not matter nor *jīva*. It is the true and the infinite." Similarly the *bhedābheda* view derives its authority from the *Śruti* "Sat is one and it became the many." Cosmological truth is conveyed in the teaching, "Brahman is

that from which these beings emerge and into which they merge. Brahman desired 'May I be many' and it became the manifold." The main *pramāṇa* for *Vīśiṣṭādvaita* is the *antaryāmī* text that Brahman is the self of which the *jīva* is the body. The nature of Brahman is indicated by the instruction that it is free from sin, hunger and thirst and that its purposes are ever true. Likewise, the pluralistic view of *bheda* is said to be held in the *Upaniṣad* "Thinking that the self is different from its Maker and blessed by Him, he reaches immortality." "He is the master of the *pradhāna* and the individual souls. There are two birds on the same tree." In spite of the divergences of these different texts, there is an underlying unity and Bādarāyaṇa, with his encyclopaedic knowledge and unrivalled synoptic genius, had an insight into the unity of their import and built up the magnificent system of *Vedānta* by assigning to each text its proper place in the whole scheme. He discerned the common thread that runs through these conflicting texts and harmonised them into a consistent and coherent whole. But his *Sūtras* are themselves so terse and cryptic that they cannot be understood without the aid of commentators like Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja and Madhva. Each of these *ācāryās* interprets the *Śrutis* and the *Sūtras* in his own way in the light of his *sampradāya* or tradition. Besides the systems formulated by them known as *Advaita*, *Vīśiṣṭādvaita* and *Dvaita*, there are other schools like the *Bhedābheda* of Bhāskara, Yādava and Nimbārka, the *Śivādvaita* of Śrīkaṇṭha, the *Acintyābheda* of Baladeva, the *Suddhādvaita* of Vallabha and the *Vīśeṣādvaita* of Śrīkara. Each of these systems claims to be the only view that fits in with the general drift and spirit of the *Upaniṣads* and satisfies all the *pramāṇas* and the

logical, grammatical, and *Mīmāṃsa* rules of interpretation and it is very difficult to decide among these rival expositions.

The difficulty is further increased by the application of the modern methods of historic and philosophical criticism to the proper understanding of the *Upaniṣads* and the *Sūtras*. The chief among the modern expositors, excluding hostile and prejudiced writers like Gough, Monier Williams and Slater, are Deussen, Max Muller and Thibaut, not to speak of leading Indian thinkers. According to the historic method, ancient Indian philosophy is a historical growth and can be studied under periods; the different stages in the development of *Vedic* religion are traced and progress is evaluated in the light of a true chronological perspective arrived at by historical research. The four *Vedas* with their three parts, the *Mantras*, the *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Upaniṣads* are the compositions of different ṛṣis at different times and in different places. The hymnology of the *Ṛg Veda* composed about fifteen centuries before Christ refers to the creative period of the *Vedas* when the forces of nature were personified and deified and it marks the earliest phase of the religious consciousness. The *Brāhmaṇas* which came later are of the age of the sacrificial cult and they were followed by the *āraṇyakas* which show the transition from ritualism to rationalism and thus anticipate the speculative tendencies of the *Upaniṣads*. The *Upaniṣads* are assigned to a period 1200 B.C.—600 B.C. and are considered mostly pre-Buddhistic. In the light of the criteria afforded by the language, the style and the ideological differences of the texts, the canonical *Upaniṣads* are sifted, selected and chronologically arranged with the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and the

*Chāndogya* as the earliest and the *Śvetāśvatara* and the *Māṇḍūkya* as the latest. In the philosophic development of *Vedic* thought, from the period of the *Mantras* to that of the *Upaniṣads*, there are four stages, namely, primitive polytheism, henotheism, monotheism and monism. Polytheism gives place to henotheism when each God is worshipped as if he is the supreme god. Henotheism grows into monotheism and thus satisfies the needs of the theistic consciousness. Varuṇa, the supreme *Vedic* god, was later superseded by Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu and Rudra, who were minor gods in the *Vedic* pantheon, were later on identified with Nārāyaṇa and Śiva and they became supreme in the later *Vaiṣṇava* and *Śaiva Upaniṣads*. In the history of Indian philosophy, the creative period of the *Vedas* was followed by the critical period of the schools and by the rise of the systems of philosophy, *Vedic* and non-*Vedic*. The *Upaniṣads* are "broad speculative ideas and mental possessions"; they are "guesses at God" and gropings after the infinite. They are spiritual intuitions, which were later systematised in the critical period and reduced to rigorous uniformity.

The method of philosophic criticism claims to have the advantage of a true insight into the system of the *Upaniṣads* without being bound by the literalism of the textual method and the dogmatism of the schools. It submits every dogma to critical investigation and rejects blind faith and *Vedic* externalism. The *Upaniṣads*, according to this view, lack coherence. Their consistency is intuitive rather than logical. The *Upaniṣadic* seers are often enigmatic and aphoristic in their language and they employ analogies, myths and symbols to disclose their mystic experience. The prevailing tendency of the *Upaniṣads*, on the whole, is monistic idealism summed



up in the text "*Tat tvam asi*," which connotes the identity between *ātman*, the psychic principle, and Brahman, the Cosmic ground. It was only at the later period of the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* that idealism allied itself to realism, lapsed into pantheism and further deteriorated into theism to suit the needs of the popular religious consciousness. In the *Upaniṣads*, there are three ascending steps or stages. The first stage consists in realising the fundamental distinction between the *ātman* and Brahman and the next stage is the experience of the inseparable relation between the two, *ātman* and Brahman. When the *ātman* is realised as the Absolute, philosophy arrives at the final stage and comes to itself.

Thus, following the methods of historic and philosophic criticism, all disinterested expositors like Thibaut reject the dogmatic method of the scholiasts who are bound by rules of textual criticism and who often strain the *Śrutis* to suit their own pre-conceived theories. They form their own independent judgments and state it as their considered opinion that the *Vedas* are human compositions and have no divine origin and that the *Vedic* gods were conceived in the image of man and are thus anthropomorphic personifications. If philosophy is a systematic whole that is coherent in all its parts, is free from self-contradiction and allows room for different details, there is, according to this view, no philosophy of the *Upaniṣads* as such, because they lack coherence. But if a general outline of philosophy can at all be made out from the *Upaniṣads*, Śaṅkara's system of two *vidyās*, two Brahman and two *muktis* is the best that can be devised since it does justice to the different stages of the historic development of thought, is more capable of amalgamating heterogeneous material than other systems and better

represents the general drift and spirit of the *Upaniṣads*. It marks the growth of thought from the external to the internal, from the objective to the subjective and from the personal to the impersonal. But an impartial study of the *Sūtras* as expounded by Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja makes it clear that Rāmānuja is more faithful to them than Śaṅkara who at first interprets the *Sūtras* in a normal and natural way and then forces and foists his own views on them. Likewise the teaching of the *Gītā* is theistic and is an amalgam of *Vedānta* and *Pāñcarātra*. It is the idealisation of *Vedic* Varuṇa worship and is the adaptation of *Upaniṣadic* monism to suit the needs of the popular religious consciousness.

The soundness of the historical method of research is undeniable as it throws light on the psychological development of religion and widens our sympathy for the followers of religion in its different stages and strata, but its specific application to ancient Indian wisdom is not sound or satisfactory. The ancient philosophers went beyond time and tense and had no use for historic knowledge. The *ṛṣis* were mainly interested in the discovery and dissemination of spiritual truths which are true for ever. They cared more for the intrinsic values of religion than for their genesis or temporal origin. Even as regards the *Sūtra* period when chronology is said to be clearer and more definite, it is difficult to fix the relative dates of the various systems as they grew at the same time by mutual criticism and cross references. Spiritual truths which are supersensuous and supra-rational can be known only in a spiritual way. They transcend the regions of history and perceptual knowledge and even the sphere of philosophic concepts and categories. Temporal priority and philosophic

priority are not the same. What comes earlier is not necessarily truer than what comes later. Nor is the reverse true. It is claimed, for example, by the monists that *Upaniṣadic* monism came later than *Vedic* polytheism and is therefore more true; but it is assailed by the theistic argument that the theism of the *Śvetāśvatara*, came later than the monism of the *Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad* and should therefore be truer than monism. The modern view that there is a development in thought from *Vedic* polytheism to *Vedāntic* monism is not accepted by pundits who have a mastery of the methods of *Vedic* exposition and of the rules of logic, grammar and *mīmāṃsa*. They declare that *Veda* and *Vedānta* are integrally related as *Veda-Vedānta* and that the same *Vedic Mantras* are employed in the *Upaniṣads*. In the daily duty of *sandhyāvandana*, for example, the *Vedic Mantra* is addressed not to the sun but to the Inner Ruler of the sun that is the Light of all lights and the *Vedic* and the *Vedāntic* meanings are identical.

The prevailing view that monistic idealism is the completion and crown of *Upaniṣadic* philosophy is not accepted by those *Vedāntins* who insist on the integrity of the *Upaniṣadic* texts, the triple *prasthānas* and the *pramāṇas* of *śruti*, *yukti* and *anubhava* or revelation, reasoning and intuition. The *Upaniṣads* should be interpreted as a whole and not in terms of sectional thinking which consists in elevating a few texts as expressions of absolute truth and treating other texts as only partially true and partially false. It is impossible to go from relative truths to absolute truth or from falsity to truth. The *ācāryas* recognise the equal validity and value of the three *prasthānas*; but modern critics like Thibaut declare it as their independent and impartial judgment

that the *Upaniṣads* support Śaṅkara while the *Vedānta Sūtras* support Rāmānuja. This view cuts at the very root of *Vedāntic* consistency and does justice neither to the *Śruti* nor to the *Sūtras*, neither to Śaṅkara nor to Rāmānuja. Śaṅkara's theory of two *vidyās*, two Brahman and two *muktis* is founded on the distinction between the esoteric doctrine for the wise man or *vidvān* and the exoteric doctrine for the ignorant man or the mass-mind. It is a philosophy of compromise and self-complacency. Strictly speaking, there can be no compromise between truth and falsity and the esoteric and the exoteric doctrines are contradictory and have no common ground. Absolutism based on *vidyā* cannot be reconciled with theism based on *avidyā*. If the Absolute is all-accommodating, it should accommodate falsity and evil. When monistic idealism based on *jñāna* lapses into mere dialectic thinking, it degrades the value of religion by equating it with myth, dogma and ritualism and tracing it to the anthropomorphising tendency of the *avidyā*-ridden mind. At the same time it seeks to elevate philosophy to the level of absolutism by freeing it from the errors of dualistic thinking. This is the way of self-complacency and of dogma and dictation. If, as the *Māyāvādin* says, the *Upaniṣads* speak with the double voice of philosophy and religion, their meaning and relation should be clearly defined. There is no toleration in saying that *Advaitic* philosophy is for the wise few and that theology and theism are for the ignorant many. If the end of religion as such is the direct intuition of Brahman, which is justified by philosophy, the *Upaniṣads* are a philosophy of religion which defines Brahman at once as the cosmic source and the spiritual goal. They voice forth in clear terms the one *Upaniṣadic* truth that

Brahman is the be-all and end-all of life which satisfies the three *pramāṇas* of *Śruti*, *yukti* and *anubhava* in their integral unity. While some modern *Advaitins* extol reason as the only guide to *Brahmajñāna*, others rely on the intuition of Brahman as the only test of *Advaitic* truth and still others are content to accept the theological view that *Sāstra* is the only source of gaining *Brahmajñāna*. Thus these exponents speak in different ways. The safer method for *Advaita* would lie in retracing its steps and recognising the integrity of all *Upaniṣadic* texts, the *prasthānas* and the *pramāṇas* and thus falling in line with the *Vedāntic* philosophy of religion, which speaks of one Brahman, one *mukti* and one Truth.

Following the usual method of philosophy, the subject is studied in this book under the heads of epistemology, ontology, cosmology, psychology, ethics and religion. Epistemology is the theory of knowledge or the method of knowing Brahman through *pramāṇas*. Ontology is the enquiry into the nature of the Being of Brahman. Cosmology traces the emergence of the cosmic order from Brahman and its mergence into Brahman, in rhythmic succession. Psychology describes the nature of the *ātman* and its states of consciousness and its career in the world of *karma*. Ethics deals with the nature of *dharma* and the *sādhana*s or means of gaining *Brahmajñāna* and religion defines the nature of *mukti* and the destiny and value of the emancipated self. This analytical method is implicit in the *Upaniṣads* themselves and made explicit in the *Vedānta Sūtras*.

The main purpose of this work is to show that, if the *Sūtras* and the *Gītā* support Rāmānuja as is now generally held, the *Upaniṣads* on which they are based are equally

*Viśiṣṭādvaitic* in their general import. The widely prevalent view that the *Upaniṣads* teach the illusion theory which holds that the world is a phantom and the self a mere reflection of Brahman and that morality and religion are only appearances of Reality has done great harm to the cause of Hinduism especially in its social and political aspects. It becomes necessary, therefore, that Rāmānuja's interpretation of the *Upaniṣads* should be better known than at present. Since Brahman is real, the world of *acit* and *cit* which have their source in it, is equally real. The world is real and the self is an eternal entity with an intrinsic value of its own. This view does justice as much to the needs of moral and religious life as to the demands of philosophical thought.

## I. THE EPISTEMOLOGY OF THE UPANIṢADS

The problem of epistemology as a theory of knowledge is an enquiry into the relation between knowledge and reality and into the nature of truth. *Upaniṣadic* epistemology is rooted in its philosophy and its foundational truth is that reality is knowable and not unknown and unknowable. The problem of the *Upaniṣad* is not a mere metaphysical speculation on the nature of the ultimate and the universal, but it is the spiritual quest of the *mumukṣu* after the supreme reality known as Brahman. The problem of philosophy is well described by the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*<sup>1</sup> in its opening texts: "Whence are we born? Whereby do we live? Why do we suffer?" The same question is formulated in different ways in the other canonical *Upaniṣads*. Its popular form is stated by the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* thus: "Lead me from the unreal to the real, lead me from darkness to light, lead me from death to immortality."<sup>2</sup> In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, Uddālaka asks his son, Śvetaketu, who was proud and thought that he knew everything, whether he had acquired the knowledge of the One by which the many is realised;<sup>3</sup> in the next chapter, which is on the *Bhūmavidyā*,<sup>4</sup> Nārada confesses to Sanātkumāra that, though he has acquired mastery in all sciences and arts, he is still tormented by doubt

1. *Śv. Up.*, I. 1

2. *asato mā sadgamaya tamaso mā jyotirgamaya mṛtyormā amṛtam gamaya*—*Br. Up.*, I. iii 28

3. *Ch. Up.*, VI. i. 3.

4. *Ch. Up.*, VII.

and discontent; he is then initiated into the knowledge of Brahman as the *Bhūman*, which is infinite and eternal bliss. *Vedic* knowledge thus finds its consummation in *Vedāntic* wisdom. Later, the same *Upaniṣad* expounds the nature of Brahman psychologically as the Self that is sinless and deathless and beyond the three states of consciousness. Indra, the king of the *Devas*, and Virocana, the king of the *Asuras*, request Prajāpati to impart to them the knowledge of the self.<sup>5</sup> While Virocana is satisfied with the materialistic theory that the self is the body and teaches it to the *Asuras*, Indra is not satisfied with the solution and enquires into the spiritual knowledge of reality by which the mortal becomes the immortal and the sinless. In the *Kāthopaniṣad*, whose subject-matter is mainly ethical, Naciketas asks Yama, the god of Death, to solve his doubt<sup>6</sup> whether the *ātman* survives the body after death and to teach him the way of deathlessness. Naciketas rejects all the boons, earthly and celestial, offered by Yama, such as longevity, happiness and world sovereignty,<sup>7</sup> and prefers the way of the good to that of the pleasant<sup>8</sup> and seeks to know the supreme *ātman* which is ever pure and perfect. In the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, Śaunaka beseeches Aṅgīras to initiate him into the metaphysical knowledge of Brahman, as he is not satisfied with the lower knowledge which relates to things that are not Brahman. He seeks *parā vidyā* as opposed to *aparā vidyā*,<sup>9</sup> rejects what is

5. *Ch. Up.*, VIII. vii.

6. *Kāth. Up.*, I. i. 20.

7. *Kāth. Up.*, I. i. 23-29.

8. *Kāth. Up.*, I. ii. 2-4.

9. *Muṇḍ. Up.*, I. 3-5.



empirical and transient and prefers transcendental and eternal bliss. In the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*,<sup>10</sup> Varuṇa expounds to his son, Bṛghu, the nature of Brahman, that it is trans-empirical and blissful. The disciple is made to realise by spiritual induction that Brahman is not *annamaya*, *prāṇamaya*, *manomaya* or *vijñānamaya*, but is *ānandamaya*. Secular knowledge obtained by the study of the physical, biological, psychological and normative sciences and even by metaphysical speculation is only fractional and fleeting; but the spiritual intuition of Brahman leads to immortal bliss. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, Maitreyī tells her husband Yājñavalkya that the whole world with all its riches has no attraction for her and requests him to teach her the way of immortal life.<sup>11</sup> In this way every *Upaniṣad* defines the problem of the *mumukṣu* or seeker after Brahman as different from that of the mere scientist or metaphysician. While the scientist tries to know a partial aspect of reality and the philosopher speculates on the nature of reality as a whole, the *mumukṣu* seeks to know reality or Brahman as the ultimate ground of existence and to realise it as the supreme goal of experience. The Indian philosopher who follows the *Upaniṣadic* path insists on methodology and on a true theory of knowledge which alone can lead to the knowledge of truth and reality. The nature of the *prameya* largely depends on that of the *pramāṇas*. A knowledge of the *pramāṇas* and the theories of truth and error are pre-supposed in a systematic study of the *Upaniṣads*.

10. *Taitt. Up.*, Bṛghuvalli, 1-6.

11. *Br. Up.*, IV. v. 4.

The ultimate problem of *Upaniṣadic* epistemology refers to the relation between reason and revelation or *yukti* and *śruti* and the enquiry into their relation is essential to the understanding of the nature of *ātman* and Brahman. *Śāstra* is the highest authority for establishing the nature of Brahman<sup>12</sup> which is super-sensuous and supra-rational. Neither sense-perception nor logical understanding is adequate as a *pramāṇa* for proving the positive existence of Brahman. This view raises the question whether the *Vedāntic* knowledge of Brahman is a blind belief without any rational justification or verification by personal experience. It is the age-long controversy between revelation, reason and intuition, that is to say, between *Śruti*, *yukti* and *anubhava*. The full meaning of *Śāstraic* authority can be ascertained only by bringing out the exact nature and relation between revelation, reason and intuitive experience. Some *Vedāntins* accept the trustworthiness of *Veda* and feel that its authority cannot be questioned or disputed. Others argue that *Vedānta* is essentially rational and scientific and reject the faith of the fundamentalist or the scholastic believer. Still others think that the only proof of the existence of Brahman is direct experience of Brahman and insist on personal experience as the highest proof of the existence of God.

Those who make a distinction between reason and faith and assert that revelation is the only authority for faith in the existence of God may be classified into different types. Some appeal to the supernatural origin of revelation and affirm that its authenticity is super-human in essence and miraculous in evidence. It is not

12. *Brahma Sūtras*, I i. 3.

accessible to the human faculty of sense-perception or reason, as it is the expression of divine omnipotence. God by a fiat of His will interferes with and suspends the laws of nature with a view to instilling religious faith into the minds of atheists and sceptics. The miraculous is not a violation or breach of law, but is a supersession of, or breach into, law. It is not merely the extraordinary but also what runs counter to the ordinary. What God wills is good but the converse, *viz.*, what is good is divine, is not true. Miracles thus prove revelation and revelation proves the miracle of the working of divine omnipotence. Others think that miraculous intervention is not essential to supernatural dispensation and say that revelation is the word of God. It is a direct communication from God to the inspired prophet. It is breathed forth from God and is the expression of divine omniscience and is therefore infallible.

Still others reject both these theories on the ground that they are dogmatic and are opposed to the evidence of sense-perception and science, and argue that revelation is philosophically intelligible and is not hostile to reason. Rational theology accepts the trustworthiness of the logical intellect and offers proofs for the existence of God, and these proofs are cosmological, teleological, ontological or moral. The first proof employs the category of causality and concludes that God is the first cause or the supreme cause. The second proof is an argument from analogy. The order and wisdom that are found in nature suggest a world designer or God. The third proof refers to a perfect being in whom essence and existence are one. According to the fourth, the moral law of duty and the craving for happiness can be connected only by the conception of God. God alone is

the author of the natural and moral order. In this way reason becomes the ally of revelation and justifies the ways of God to man. These arguments are neither convincing nor final, as there is really no passage from the concept of cause to the first cause, from nature to the god of nature, from idea to existence and from the finite to the infinite. The causal category suffers from the fallacy of infinite regress and it does not reveal the nature of reality itself. Besides, the concept of God is not God and it is impossible to infer the existence of the infinite from the data of finite experience. These theistic proofs may be employed to support polytheism as well.

Some rationalists go a step further and insist on the rationality of the universe. Reality is a rational whole and satisfies the tests of coherence and comprehensiveness. The intellect is trustworthy and even in the attempt to deny reason, reason is presupposed. The rationalist thus offers a pan-logical explanation of reality and says that God is the great universal that is immanent in all beings and is the logical highest. There are some extreme monists who rely entirely on the primacy of reason as the life blood of philosophy and prove the existence of the self as the only reality by sheer *vicāra* or dialectic thinking. Rationalism like empiricism, however, often ends in agnosticism and scepticism ; and there are philosophers, both in the East and in the West, who bring out the contradiction between thought and reality and conclude that the absolute is beyond discursive thought and even go to the extent of denying the possibility of knowledge itself. We can only know the phenomenal and not the noumenal, the relative and not the absolute, the 'what' and not the 'that,' and the self-contradiction between reality and appearance is somehow

there and is indeterminable. This sceptic mood is said to demonstrate the inadequacy of the intellect to grasp the nature of reality. The intellect spatialises intuition and dissects it into dead bits and gives us only diagrams of reality. Divinity cannot be discovered by dialectic skill.

The *mumukṣu* as a seeker after God can transcend the barriers of the intellect as he has acquired mastery over instinctive life and can have a direct intuition of God. While reason can reach only the gateway to God, intuition can enter into the heart of reality, and what is logically inferred can be spiritually intuited. The logic of the heart has as much constraining power as the demands of the intellect. The term intuition cannot be explained in terms of sentient experience, feeling, intellectual love or intuition or some mysterious and indefinite faculty as it refers to a supersensuous or supra-intellectual experience. When consciousness is freed from the confusions of *avidyā* and the limitations of *karma*, it can know reality. Intuition is alogical and amoral in the sense that it is a completion of the intellectual and moral life and is supra-rational and supra-moral and not irrational or immoral. Instinctive life is capable of being rationalised and reason can be spiritualised. The seeker after Brahman can transcend the fragmentariness of sense-perception and the necessity of thought and attain direct knowledge. The antagonism between revelation and reason is thus sought to be bridged by the intuitionist as he claims to have a direct and face-to-face knowledge of reality. He relies on the mystic method by which the seeker after truth with his genius for God has a soul-sight of God and loses himself in the

immortal bliss of such communion. To the mystic, reality is not a philosophical view but a spiritual vision. To him the best proof of the existence of Brahman is the experience of Brahman. Intuition is immediate and ineffable, but it is not mere sentient experience or occult knowledge. Mysticism is not opposed to reason, as it claims to be the fulfilment of all experience.

The *Vedāntic* philosopher rejects the extremes of revelational faith, rationalism and mysticism as one-sided and abstract and seeks to correct their defects by a synthetic exposition. The believer in mere revelation distrusts reason and becomes dogmatic and fanatical. The *mumukṣu* does not worship mere words, nor is he interested in every detail of revelation. He accepts as much of revelation as is relevant to his spiritual quest and appreciates the contrast set forth in the scripture between the perishing values of empirical life and the eternal values of divine life. Besides, he has faith that revelation is realisable and verifiable by personal rational experience. But whatever is immediately experienced or personally verified need not be necessarily true. Intuition is often subjective and variable and it is very difficult to decide between rival intuitions. In such cases, the philosophic intellect subjects every spiritual experience to the test of reason and evaluates it in the light of an objective standard. Reason mediates between revelation and intuition and makes revelation intelligible and intuition valid. It thus avoids the perils of dogmatism and subjectivism and offers a synoptic view of experience as a whole. From this point of view revelation may be defined as a body of objective spiritual 'ideas' or verities which are spiritually discernible and verifiable. This definition has the merit of recognising the place of

revelation, reason and intuition in *Vedānta* and co-ordinating them into a systematic unity. The three are organically related and are correlated in a true philosophy of religion in which reality is conceived as an integral whole and realised as the home of all eternal values like truth, goodness and beauty. It corrects the dogmatism of theology, it is philosophically satisfying, and it justifies intuition. Mere theology makes a fetish of faith and supports fanaticism on the ground that truth is fixed and final. Philosophy as speculative activity is the protest of reason against mere belief and it often ends in agnosticism. Intuition makes faith intelligible and inspires the intellect, but is subjective and variable. But wisdom consists in reconciling the conflicts between *Śruti*, *yukti* and *anabhava* by the philosophic faith that Reality or Brahman enshrined in *Śāstra* can be apprehended by purified thought and attained as the highest end of life and the home of all eternal values.

The faith in *Śāstra* as the sole authority for *Brahmajñāna* may lapse into dogmatism and literalism. Blind faith in the letter of the *Veda* takes the place of philosophy. If revelation is made subservient to reason, *Vedānta* is liable to the defects of intellectualism and agnosticism. Thought begins with doubt and ends with doubt. If intuition becomes the test of *Vedānta*, it would end in subjectivism. These difficulties can be overcome by avoiding the extremes and by reconciling the claims of *Śruti*, *yukti* and *anubhava*. Revelation is intuited by the *Ṛṣi* and rationalised by the *ācārya* and the three are linked together as one *Vedāntic* authority. The *Upaniṣad* says that Vāmadeva intuited Brahman as his very self. Vyāsa was himself both a *Ṛṣi* and a systematic expounder.

The *Upaniṣadic* theory of epistemology cannot be understood without the aid of *Vedāntins* like Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja and Madhva who are recognised expositors of the *Śrutis*. According to Śaṅkara, there is really no distinction between knowing and being. In other words, there is no distinction between epistemology, the theory of knowing, and ontology, the theory of being. Brahman is pure, non-differentiated intelligence and *Brahma-jñāna* is jñāna that is Brahman and not jñāna of Brahman. The Absolute is knowledge as such and there is no knowledge of the Absolute in the adjectival sense. Brahman or Reality simply is, and it is neither true nor false. Just when *ajñāna* is removed, just then *jñāna* arises. This is called *parā vidyā* or the knowledge of Brahman that is indestructible and secondless. But as the popular mind cannot grasp the Absolute, Śaṅkara makes a distinction between *vyāvahārika satya* and *pāramārthika satya*. The former is for the ignorant and the latter is for the wise. Though Reality is self-established, it admits, in practical life, of degrees of truth and falsity based upon the principle of non-contradiction and *apacchedavāda*. According to this view, the Absolute is non-contradictory or Reality in itself. *Jñāna* is later in order and force than *ajñāna* and therefore sublates it. By denying the false, the true is affirmed. By applying this principle to establish the truth of *Advaita*, duality is first affirmed and denied and non-duality is then established. *Śruti* is of greater weight than perceptual knowledge as it alone enables us to know Brahman. Even in *Śruti* the non-dualistic texts have more force than the dualistic texts. *Śruti* first defines Brahman as *saguṇa* in the interests of the ignorant and then denies it by saying that Brahman is *nirguṇa*. In this way, in



practical life, there is a passage from the unreal to the real and progression in knowledge. But when the Absolute is intuited as such, there is no question of such progression. This truth is illustrated analogically by what is known as *arundhatīnyāya*. In ordinary life, a man who wishes to point out to a friend the small star Arundhatī may ask him at first to see a big neighbouring star saying that it is Arundhatī although it is really not so and then may point out the real Arundhatī; in the same way the *Advaitic* teacher first defines Brahman as *saguṇa* and then affirms the Absolute.

This theory of two *vidyās* and of degrees of truth is refuted by Rāmānuja on the ground that Brahman is one and that *Brahmajñāna* is attainable by purified and perfected intelligence. The knowledge of Brahman is not Brahman, as knowing and being are different. Epistemology or the theory of the knowledge of Brahman is different from, though it leads to, ontology or the theory of the Being of Brahman. If the Absolute is, as Śaṅkara says, beyond all distinction and difference, then there can be no passage from degrees of truth to the Absolute. Then the theory of knowledge would become the theory of no knowledge and land us in agnosticism if not in scepticism. It serves no purpose to say that *Śāstra* first teaches duality and then denies it *in toto*. The *Advaitic* impasse is avoided by following the *Sūtra* method which insists on the authority of the *Śāstra* as faultless and final and defines Brahman as the ground of all beings cosmologically and the supreme end of life spiritually. Reality and value coincide and Brahman, which is the metaphysical highest, is also the spiritual highest. This view substitutes for the principle of non-contradiction and its world-destroying logic, the principle

of continuity and co-ordination. There can be no going from nescience to knowledge or from untruth to truth. All knowledge is real and of the real; the true can be known only by the true and not by the untrue. *Jñāna* is a progressive unfolding of what is perfect and it is a real development from world consciousness to self-consciousness and from self-consciousness to God-consciousness. By realising God or Brahman as the One Self everything else is realised.

## II. THE ONTOLOGY OF THE UPANIṢADS

The supreme interest of the *Upaniṣads* is *Brahmajijñāsa* or the enquiry into the nature of Brahman, by knowing which everything else is also known. The *Upaniṣadic* Ṛṣi posits the truth that Reality is realisable. *Brahmajijñāsa* leads to *Brahmajijñāna*. The knowledge of Brahman is the beginning and the end of *Upaniṣadic* enquiry. The *mumukṣu* who seeks Brahman sees Brahman and attains immortal bliss. The apparent contradictions in the *Upaniṣads* are reconciled in the *Vedānta Sūtras* and they constitute a systematic whole of inter-related parts. Śaṅkara says that the *Sūtras* string together the flowers of the *Śrutis* and they formulate the main teaching of the *Upaniṣads* in a clear, distinct and adequate way. But the style of the *Sūtras* is very terse and cryptic and their meaning cannot be grasped without the help of *Vedāntic* specialists. Among the chief *Vedāntic* schools are the systems of *Advaita*, *Viśiṣṭādvaita* and *Dvaita* as also the various schools of *Bhedābheda* which are now a forgotten chapter in the history of Indian thought.

Whatever differences may exist among these systems, they all agree in holding that the knowledge of Brahman is the fundamental teaching of all the main *Upaniṣads* and that the conclusions of *Vedānta* are opposed to those of the materialism of the *Cārvākas*, the vitalism of the *Prāṇaists*, the phenomenism of the Buddhists and the ritualism of the *Mīmāṃsakas*. The *Lokāyatas* or materialists say that there is no metaphysics apart from

physics and that what we call self is only a psycho-physical series. The *Prāṇaists* or vitalists state that reality is the vital impulse or *prāṇa* and prove it by positive and negative tests. Where there is *prāṇa*, there is the self and where there is no *prāṇa* there is no self. The Buddhistic phenomenologists say that reality is only a fleeting flux without any substantiality or stability and adduce arguments to disprove the existence of the self and God. The rationalists insist on the primacy of reason. The ideas of God as First Cause and the Cosmic Designer are open to the charges of infinite regress and self-contradiction. The *Sāṅkhya* is also a rationalist and though he accepts the reality of *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*, he does not require a god to enable him to gain *kaivalya*. The *Mīmāṃsaka* asserts that *karma* alone is Brahman. To him the performance of duty is more important than the knowledge of the deity.

These theories do not satisfy the philosophic demand for unity and stability and the spiritual thirst for immortal bliss. It is *Vedānta* alone that reaches the bed-rock of knowledge and brings out the fullest meaning of experience. Its foundational principle is the knowledge of Brahman as the logical highest and spiritual highest. But there are differences amongst the *Vedāntic* schools themselves in ascertaining the exact nature of Brahman and *mukti*. The different systems may be divided into two distinct groups, viz., the *Advaita* on the one hand and the other systems, which differ from it in many important points, on the other. The main point of controversy is the question whether Brahman is *nirguṇa* or *sagūṇa* (the 'Absolute of metaphysics' or the 'god of religion') and this is fully discussed in the branches of philosophy known as epistemology, ontology, cosmology and religion.

According to Śaṅkara, the *Upaniṣads* adopt a dual standpoint and distinguish between *parā vidyā* (higher knowledge) and *aparā vidyā* (lower knowledge), *saguṇa* Brahman and *nirguṇa* Brahman (God and the Absolute), *pariṇāmvāda* and *vivartavāda* (evolution and illusion), *kramamukti* and *jīvanmukti* (freedom from embodiment and freedom in embodiment). But the other *Vedāntins* deny that there is any basis in the *Upaniṣads* for these distinctions, and according to them the *Upaniṣads* affirm the absolute reality of *saguṇa* Brahman, uphold the truths of *pariṇāmvāda* and do not give room for the theory of *jīvanmukti*. The divergences of interpretation are examined critically in certain selected topics in the *Sūtras*, the *Sad vidyā*,<sup>1</sup> the *Ubhaya-linga Adhikaraṇa*,<sup>2</sup> the *Ānandamayādhikaraṇa*<sup>3</sup> and the *Kāryādhikaraṇa*.<sup>4</sup> The problem of the *Sad vidyā* is whether Brahman, the *sat* without a second, is *saguṇa* or *nirguṇa*, determinate or indeterminate; that of the *Ubhaya-linga* is whether Brahman is *sākāra* or *nirākāra*, finite or infinite; and that of the *Ānandamayādhikaraṇa* is whether Brahman is bliss or blissful, *ānanda* or *ānandamaya*. In the last *adhikaraṇa*, the problem is whether Brahman is the Absolute of philosophy to be realised here-now or the God of theology attained in the world of Brahman yonder. Each of these problems may be studied in some detail in the light of the interpretations given by the different schools. Every school follows the traditional method of establishing its own con-

1. Ch. Up., VI.

2. Br. Sūt., III. ii 11.

3. Br. Sūt., I. i. 12.

4. Br. Sūt., IV. iii. 7.

clusions or *siddhānta* by eliminating or reinterpreting the views of other schools which are treated as *pūrvapakṣa* or *prima facie* theories. The supreme merit of Indian philosophy as criticism of knowledge is its analysis of rival views in a spirit of disinterested love of truth.

The first point of difference between the *Advaitins* and the non-*Advaitins* lies in the interpretation of the *Sad vidyā* which refers to Brahman as the *sat* without a second. According to Śaṅkara, the one without a second is indeterminate or *nirvīṣeṣa*, which transcends the limits of relational thought. Whatever is related to another is also limited by it. He contends that determination, quantitative or qualitative, denies the absolute unity of reality. Every determination is a negation and even the view that the universe is the self-limitation of Brahman is a defect of being and a lapse into non-being. The moment Brahman thinks and desires to be the many, negation enters into it and Brahman becomes finite-infinite. Limitation implies self-discrepancy and imperfection. The Absolute transcends the subject-object relation and is alogical and non-relational. But *saguṇa* Brahman is subject-object and is less than the Absolute. Every relation, internal or external, betrays self-contradiction because the terms are independent of the relation and at the same time enter into relation. For example, the cause is different from the effect and at the same time, is continuous with it. It applies to the phenomenal or fictitious world and not to the Absolute. The causal relation leads to endless regress and it cannot be self-explanatory. The effect is continuous with the cause and is yet contradictory to it. It is thus an illusory projection of the cause. Even in the case of the lump of clay and its modifications as pots and pitchers, the cause

alone is real and the effect illusory. Saṅkara admits degrees of reality and distinguishes between the real and the existent. The world of space, time and cause exists, but it is not real, because it is sublated by the knowledge of the Absolute. He, however, recognises the needs of the empirical consciousness and concedes the reality of *sa-guṇa* Brahman or personal God. Though Brahman is *nirguṇa* and *niravayava*, it assumes a shape formed by *māyā* to satisfy the devotee. To subserve the purpose of meditation, the infinite beyond space is localised and limited as the object of nescience and the devotee secures the ends or rewards of life. Ether is all-pervading, but it is limited when it is enclosed in a jar. Likewise, Brahman is the All-Self, but it seems to abide in the lotus of the heart to satisfy the ignorant man. The distinction between the Internal Ruler and the *jīva* is like that between universal ether and the ether in the jar, and is due to nescience. Where there is duality as it were, there one sees another.<sup>5</sup> But Brahman as the subject of knowledge is free from the limiting conditions of the subject-object relation and is the one without a second.

But the other *Vedāntins* repudiate and reject this distinction on the ground that it is not warranted by any of the *pramāṇas*. It is meaningless to say that determination is negation. On the other hand negation is determination and has a positive meaning. All knowledge is relational and a non-relational experience is unthinkable like burying one's shadow or denying one's mother. If the indeterminate is devoid of content, there would be no scope for moral aspiration and no hope of religious

5. *yatra hi dvaitam iva bhavati tad itara itaram paśyati* — Br. Up., IV. v. 15.

attainment. Every judgment presupposes the conscious subject and if self-consciousness is a defect or delusion, then consciousness itself which is a correlative factor of the self is a delusion. The nature of Brahman no doubt is alogical and indefinable, but this does not mean that Brahman cannot be realised by purified and exalted consciousness. The causal relation is not self-contradictory. It expresses the spiritual truth that Brahman is the source of our being and the ultimate meaning or reason of every finite experience. The distinction between reality and existence based on the law of non-contradiction disproves everything and proves nothing. If there are degrees of reality and truth, then there is no reality or truth at all. Besides, the criterion of truth is based as much upon valuation as upon sublation; reality and value co-exist, and the *sat* is the ground of existence and the goal of experience in which all eternal values are conserved. Therefore, the non-*Advaitins* reject the theory of *nirguṇa* Brahman as the root error of the metaphysics of *māyāvāda*. Predication is not the perversion of reality, but is its inner revelation. The *Sad vidyā* defines Brahman as the one without a second which differentiates itself into the subjects and objects of experience and is real reality and the ultimate meaning of experience. The *Taittirīya* text, *viz.*, Brahman is *satyam*, *jñānam*, *anantam*, defines the nature of Brahman and says that it is different from the world of space-time-cause and the world of souls and is the true of the true, the true infinite and the All-Self. It does not refer to an "absolutely homogeneous intelligence" without any content. The existence of Brahman can be apprehended and its nature comprehended and there can be no apprehension of a thing without comprehending what it



is. Brahman therefore is and has *satyam*, *jñānam* and *anantam* and is not a bare abstraction. Every term in a proposition, thing and thought, ultimately connotes Brahman as the All-Self and, by knowing the Self everything which derives its form and function from it is also known.

The second point of difference is in the exposition of the *Ubhayalingādhikaraṇa*<sup>6</sup> which considers the problem of Brahman as *śākāra* or *nirākāra* with or without form. Śaṅkara as a monist thinks that Brahman is not only *nirguṇa* but also *nirākāra* and is indeterminate, non-differentiated and formless and claims that his view avoids the errors of materialism and mentalism. The view that the highest Brahman is finite-infinite is self-contradictory. The world of *nāmarūpa* is not, according to Śaṅkara, the self-expression of Brahman, but is only an appearance super-imposed on the Absolute by the limiting adjuncts of nescience, like the seeming red colour of the crystal which is white. The sun is one though its reflections appear to be many. Likewise Brahman is uniform though it appears to be multiform. When there is a conflict between *bheda Śrutis* and *abheda Śrutis*, the latter alone are valid because they cannot be sublated by any higher knowledge. Finite existence is fictitious like the illusion arising from mistaking the shell for silver. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* therefore affirms that Brahman is the true infinite in the sense that all finitude is false and fictitious. The negative method of *neti-neti*<sup>7</sup> employed in the text denies the finite and affirms the infinite. It negatives the cosmic

6. *Br. Up.*, II. iii. and *Brahma Sūtras*, III. ii. 11.

7. *athāta ādeśo neti neti.—Br. Up.*, II. iii. 6.

plurality fictitiously super-imposed on Brahman. The unreal snake is negated with reference to the real rope. The denial of difference implies the affirmation of identity. It is therefore unjust to interpret *Advaita* as Buddhistic nihilism or *Śūnyavāda*. The entire *Vedānta* would be stultified if Brahman as an entity is denied. The perception of plurality is due to *avidyā* and when *avidyā* is sublated by *vidyā*, the infinite remains identical with itself as an entity and the idea of difference vanishes. Śaṅkara thus proves that Brahman is *nirākāra*, but, at the same time, provides for the theistic demand for a personal God. The idea of God subserves the purposes of devout meditation.

But the other *Vedāntins* controvert this interpretation of *ubhayaṅga* and reject its singularistic view that the infinite alone is real and the finite false and non-existent. If Brahman is real and is the basis of *bhramā* and the world of *nāmarūpa*, the effect should be as real as the cause. Since Brahman is real, the world must also be real and Śaṅkara himself admits the fact that the existing world is not destroyed by *jñāna*. The finite is rooted in the infinite and is not sublated by it. Bhāskara interprets the word '*neti*' as a denial of the finitude of reality and not of the finite self. The object of the repetition of *neti, neti* is to exclude the world of *acit* and *cit* from the definition of Brahman. The Absolute transcends relational thought but does not sublate it. According to Rāmānuja, this *adhikaraṇa* brings out the ethics of *Vedānta* by defining Brahman as absolutely pure and perfect. Brahman is not only free from the imperfections of the finite self but has an infinity of perfections. The infinite is in the finite with a view to infinitising it and freeing it from its imperfections. The infinite is not

affected by the changes of *prakṛti* and is therefore formless; but it assumes a spiritual form of its own to divinise the finite self. If logical immanence brings out the divineness of the world order, ethical eminence draws out the divinising quality of Brahman. Brahman is thus the metaphysical highest and the ethical highest.

The *Sūtrakāra* discusses in the section dealing with *ānandamaya* the meaning of Brahman as *ānandamaya* as expounded in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*.<sup>8</sup> According to Śaṅkara, who is called *Puccha Brahmavādin*, Brahman is bliss and not the blissful. Śaṅkara rejects the adjectival theory that Brahman is blissful for three reasons. Firstly, the term *ānandamaya* refers to the appearance of the Absolute and not to the Absolute itself. Secondly, the term *prācurya* or abundance of bliss in the suffix *mayat* of the text presupposes the co-existence of pain and the presence of imperfection which belongs only to *saguṇa* Brahman and not to the Absolute. The qualities, lower and higher, belong to the qualified Brahman only, and not to the indeterminate. Thirdly, the whole section in the *Upaniṣad* refers to the transcendental Brahman that cannot be defined logically or described by language.<sup>9</sup> Some modern philosophers distinguish between the two Brahmanas as the logical highest and the intuitionist highest and give a Hegelian version of the former. *Saguṇa* Brahman is on the logical level or *viññānamaya*. *Īśvara* is being-non-being with an element of negativity in its content having maximum reality and minimum unreality. The Absolute is intuited as an integral non-dual experience, but the moment we think

8. *Taitt. Up., Anandavalli*.

9. *yato vāco nivartante| aprāpya manasā saha| ānandam  
brahmano vidvān.—Taitt. Up., Ānand. iv.*

the Absolute, we lapse into religion and are caught up in the contradiction of the subject-object relation. The infinite is then cast in the moulds of logic or *viññāna* and becomes *Īśvara*, the highest conceptual reading of the Absolute. *Īśvara* is noumenal, being phenomenalised and riddled with the contradictions of the finite-infinite, being-non-being. But when we rise to the level of intuition, all thought expires in absolute bliss. But the majority of mankind are on the level of common sense and theistic thinking and are unable to attain the highest state of the Absolute. Śaṅkara, therefore, thinks that *ānandamaya* connotes only *saguṇa* Brahman or the god of religion who is different from the absolute bliss which is Brahman.

Bhāskara dismisses the distinction between the logical and the alogical highest as mere speculation riddled with fancies, faults and fallacies and treats it as a typical instance of *Śruticide* or text-torture. The *Upaniṣad* expounds the whole truth without compromising with ignorance and never adopts the expedient of the dual standpoint. The whole topic deals with the knowledge of Brahman and the attainment of the bliss of Brahman and this truth is enshrined in the central text, "*Brahmavid āpnoti param.*" The arguments adduced by the *Advaitins* are not tenable. The suffix *maya* in *ānandamaya* is not to be confused with the *māyā* doctrine, which is grafted on the *Upaniṣadic* system. There is really no contradiction or *vivarta* at all between Brahman and the world, leading to the denial of the world order. There is only a co-ordination between the two. The term *ānandamaya* brings out the quality of bliss as the highest determining attribute of Brahman. In the ecstasy of intuition, the self-feeling may be swallowed up, but is not sublated, and Brahman is

*ānandamaya* or the subject of eternal bliss, <sup>11</sup> differs from the *jīva* as *vijñānamaya*, which attains the bliss. Secondly, the view that Brahman transcends relational thought lapses into agnosticism. The *Śruti* denies only the knowledge of Brahman by a tainted mind, but it does not deny the possibility of a purified mind realising Brahman. Thirdly, the bliss of Brahman is absolute in the sense that it is supreme and unsurpassable. While the pleasures of sense-life and the happiness of intellectual or cultural life are transient and partial, the bliss of Brahman is eternal and ineffable. The *Śruti* adopts a calculus of pleasures on a progressive scale of values and concludes that the bliss of Brahman is the consummation of all joy or happiness. Deussen thinks that Śaṅkara's explanation is an interpolation, but Thibaut accepts it and regards it as exceedingly strained. Śaṅkara himself at first follows the *Sūtras* and expounds the topic *ānandamaya* in its natural sense as the highest Self and then he rejects it in his conclusion with the following statement: "But in reality the following remarks have to be made concerning the true meaning of the term *ānandamaya*."

The last topic called the *Kāryādhikaraṇa*<sup>10</sup> also provides an occasion for polemical warfare amongst the *Vedāntins*. The section discusses the value and destiny of the individual self and the meaning of *mukti*. Śaṅkara thinks that it brings out the distinction between the god of theology in *Brahmaloka*, the world yonder, and Brahman which is the self-accomplished Absolute of philosophy. Theology is philosophy made concrete and is a concession to commonsense and the craving of ordinary minds for a personal god. It gives a conceptual

10 *Brahma Sūtras*, IV. iii. 7.

version of the Absolute and spatialises Brahman by referring to the world of God attained by the freed self in an *aprākṛta* world. *Mukti* is the progressive ascent to the world of Brahman involving endeavour and attainment. But the Absolute is self-identical and the idea of the progressive attainment of an end is self-contradictory. Theism is rooted in commonsense and it cannot free itself from the anthropomorphic defect of humanising God and clothing Him in spatial and temporal categories. But the *jīvanmukta* realises freedom in embodiment and not from embodiment. *Mukti* is immediate self-realisation and not an attainment of a new world, the goal of our going. The *jīva* is neither a part nor an effect nor a separate entity. The idea of whole and parts and cause and effect does not apply to the Absolute or *nirguṇa* Brahman. The *jīva* cannot be atomic as its consciousness pervades its whole being. If it is infinite, then the infinite is one and the *jīva* is itself Brahman. But when Brahman is spatialised in the interests of *upāsana* or meditation, it becomes, as it were, *kārya* Brahman or effected Brahman and admits of progress and attainment. *Jñāna* destroys *ajñāna* and there are no stages of dispelling it. Śaṅkara, therefore, concludes that true *mukti* is the realisation of the self-identity of the Absolute and not the gradual attainment of freedom in a far-off world. The theists are only at the theological level and the intuition of *nirguṇa* Brahman does not appeal to their empirical consciousness. They belong to the Jaimini type following the realistic tradition and not to the higher Bādari type of philosophy of idealistic thinking. Those who worship the effected or lower Brahman attain *Brahmaloka* and eventually reach along with *Brahmā* the highest world of Visnu and attain salvation.

The other *Vedāntins* do not accept this condescending toleration and employ counter-arguments to refute the theory of two *muktis*. Bhāskara, for example, rejects the theory of *jīvanmukti* on the following grounds. Firstly, the theory of *mukti* as the removal of *avidyā* or negating negation is meaningless and may lapse into the nihilism of Buddhistic *nirvāṇa*. If *avidyā* is bare negation like the square circle there is no meaning in denying it. There can be no stages in sublation, and negation is always significant. Secondly, the removal of *avidyā* from the empirically-minded individual in *jīvanmukti* should result in universal freedom or *sarvamukti*, which is, however, not a fact. If *mukti* is really the immediate apprehension of Brahman as the self-realised Absolute, it is not philosophical to speak of two *muktis* and compromise truth.<sup>11</sup> The idea of *Īśvara* as being-becoming or as the effect of cosmic nescience reduces *saguna* Brahman to *a-Brahman*. The true meaning of *gati* is spiritual and not temporal or logical, and *mukti* is the realisation of the world of Brahman which transcends the spatial, temporal and moral order of space-time and *karma* and getting *Brahmanised*. It is thus a state of self-transcendence in which the *Brahmajñānī* lives in spaceless space and views everything under the form of eternity, intuitis Brahman and enjoys the fecundative bliss of such *Brahmajñāna*.

In spite of the divergence between the *Advaitins* and the other schools of *Vedānta* in the above essential

11. The interpretation of the whole topic by Śaṅkara in which he regards the first view (held by Bādari) as the *siddhānta* or settled conclusion and the second view (held by Jaimini) is the *prima facie* view is opposed to the practice of the *Sūtrakāra*.

topics of the *Śruti* chosen by the *Sūtrakāra*, there are some affinities between the two, which may be brought to light by analysing the following five schools of Advaita and comparing the fifth school with non-Advaitic systems. (1) *Ajātavāda*; (2) the subjective and the psychological theory; (3) the illusion theory; (4) the phenomenon theory and (5) the ethico-religious theory. *Ajātavāda* refers to the non-origination of the world and is logically irrefutable. It asserts that Brahman is and *māyā* or *avidyā* is not. What is is and what is not is not. If the existence of *avidyā* is once admitted, it cannot afterwards be denied or destroyed. Therefore *avidyā* as a positive something or *mūlāvidyā* is denied *in toto*. But a theory which denies the theorising activity of thought is no philosophy at all. The text for Advaitic subjectivism is furnished by the *Upaniṣad* that the knower cannot become an object of knowledge and that *prajñāna* is Brahman. The absolute 'I' is beyond the subject-object consciousness and the universe of space-time is only mind-begotten and mind-sustained. It is the creation of *avidyā* and is therefore fictitious. An analysis of the three states of consciousness or *avasthātraya* is a classical application of the subjective or psychological method. When consciousness is withdrawn from the waking and dream states, it remains in a non-dual state in sleep, though it is still conjoined with *avidyā*. But in the *turiya* consciousness,<sup>12</sup> pure consciousness shines without the cloud of nescience (*avidyā*). Subjectivism reaches its logical conclusion in *ekajīvanavāda*, which traces the world of space-time to the illusory projection of the single *jīva*. This aspect of *Vedānta* has no affinity

12. *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, 7.



at all with the other schools of *Vedānta* and it has no value in a true philosophy of religion. Śaṅkara himself accepts the relative reality of the external world in his refutation of *vijñānavāda*. Idealism leads to solipsism in epistemology and to egoism in ethics. The psychological approach to reality should therefore be reinterpreted in terms of cosmology.

The illusion theory as already expounded makes a distinction between the objective and the subjective sides of reality, and says that *māyā* is cosmic nescience and *avidyā* is individuated illusion. *Īśvara* and *jīva* have their respective cosmic and psychical functions in the three states of consciousness. *Īśvara* is the aggregate or totality of all semblances and He functions as *samastī* in the three states of consciousness as *Īśvara*, *Hiraṇyagarbha* and *Virāt*. The *jīva* is the product of *avidyā* and functions as *vyāṣṭi* in the three states as *prājña*, *taijasa* and *viśva*. The phenomenon theory rejects the view that the world is an illusion. *Māyā*, on this view, is the divisive consciousness in the infinite which makes it the ground of the pluralistic universe. Brahman is really the Absolute or the non-relational and *Īśvara* is the Absolute phenomenalised and the term *māyā* is a statement of the self-contradictions that are inherent in relational thought. The world of *nāmarūpa* exists, but is not real in its own right; it is phenomenal and not fictitious. In the empirical or the phenomenal state, the Absolute somehow divides itself into finite centres. But from the transcendental point of view, there is the intuition of Brahman. *Advaita* does not connote the self-identity of Brahman, but only denies difference and dissolves the pluralistic view of the world. The *mukta* is in the world, but is not infected by its contradictions. The chief defect

of this view is that it explains away *Īśvara* as the one-many or being-becoming and therefore predicates imperfections in the Absolute. All these four schools of *Advaita*, on the analogy of the Kantian distinction between the critique of pure reason and that of practical reason, may be regarded as metaphysical or dialectic enquiries into the nature of reality based more on vicāra than on scriptural and spiritual faith.

But a fifth kind of *Advaita* which may be called practical *Advaita* is the ethico-religious approach to *Advaita*. According to it, *Sūtra* is eternal and self-valid and is the only *pramāṇa* for the establishment of *Advaitic* truth by self-experience. Practical *Advaita* accepts the reality of stages and distinguishes between the *karma kāṇḍa*, the *upāsana kāṇḍa* and the *jñāna kāṇḍa*, the three kinds of reality and the two aspects of Brahman and regards *mukti* as a progressive realisation. From the ethico-religious point of view, Brahman is the god of religion who has control over *māyā* without being confronted by it. It is the *śakti* in Brahman that makes for the world process. The term '*tajjala*' in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*<sup>13</sup> is a cryptic way of saying that the cosmos comes from Brahman, is in Brahman and goes to Brahman. In *mukti*, consciousness is self-transcendent and Brahman is self-realised. Freedom cannot be attained without the four *sādhana*s including intellectual, moral and spiritual disciplines.

From the point of view of *Vedānta* as a philosophy of religion, the practical side of *Advaita* offers a basis for inter-*Vedāntic* understanding. Of the non-*Advaitic* schools, the systems of *Bhedābheda* suffer from the

13. *Ch. Up.*, III. xiv. 1.

inherent defect of predicating imperfections to the Absolute and not to the finite self. Therefore, the true meaning of the ontology of the *Upaniṣads* is furnished by the insight into the nature of the Absolute as the god of religion, different from the migrating *jīvas* and the mutations of *prakṛti*. This is the view of Rāmānuja and it is a meeting ground for all forms of philosophic thought and has the merit of furnishing a common basis for all the schools of *Vedānta* and may be briefly summarised.

The Absolute of *Vedānta* is the all-inclusive Self which is also the soul of the universe. Brahman alone exists as the intuitional highest and He is also the ethical highest. He is immanent in the universe logically and is at the same time ethically eminent. There is no contradiction between the impersonal *sat* and the personal God. The Supreme Self as Brahman is the true of the true and the eternal of eternals that pervades all beings and is ever perfect. To distinguish Brahman from *prakṛti*, it may be called impersonal, and to contrast Him from *puruṣa*, He may be called suprapersonal. This view avoids the defects of materialism as well as mentalism, anthropomorphism as well as abstractionism. Brahman is the true, the self-conscious and the blissful without any taint of error, ignorance or misery. He has *satyatva*, *jñānatva* and *ānandatva* as His determining qualities and is not *sat-cit-ānanda* as the indeterminate. Experience and value coincide and Brahman is the true of the true,<sup>13a</sup> the thinker of thinkers or the Inner Ruler Immortal<sup>14</sup> and the infinitely blissful.<sup>15</sup> Every term, thought or thing

13a. *Satyasya satyam*—*Br. Up.*, II. iii. 6.

14. *Br. Up.*, III. vii.

15. *Br. Up.*, IV. iii. 32 and *Taitt. Up.*, II. 8

refers to Brahman as its ultimate meaning. He is the light of lights and the sun, the moon and the stars derive their light from Brahman. All the joys of life are infinitesimal expressions of the infinite bliss of Brahman. It is the ultimate teaching of the *Upaniṣad* that the seeker after Brahman should become *brahmanised* and become perfect. As the cosmic principle or person or presence, Brahman is different from the unity of nature and the community of *jīvas*. It is from fear of Brahman that the sun and the moon shine and nature is uniform and the gods perform their cosmic functions. He enters into all beings and exceeds their finitude. The truth that Brahman is the cosmic centre, source and self is the theme of the next chapter.

### III. THE COSMOLOGY OF THE UPANIṢADS

Cosmology is the theory of the origin and nature of the universe and the cosmology of the *Upaniṣads* is an enquiry into the nature of Brahman as the first cause and the final cause. It is a vital part of *Vedānta* as it defines the nature and value of *Brahma jijñāsa*, though some schools of *Vedānta* ignore it. The classical text is furnished in the *Sad vidyā* of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*<sup>1</sup> and is expounded by the *Sūtrakāra*, chiefly in the section dealing with *ārambhana*.<sup>2</sup> Brahman is defined in the *Upaniṣad* as the one without a second; by knowing it as the cosmic ground, everything else which is the effect is known, just as by knowing a clod of clay, everything that is made of clay is known. The *Taittiriya Upaniṣad* gives a more concrete definition of Brahman as That from Which the world of *cit* and *acit* emerges, by Which they are sustained and into Which they merge<sup>3</sup> or *tajjalān*. The theory of creation *ex nihilo*, or out of nothing, is not recognised by the *Upaniṣads*. Likewise, the naturalistic theories of the emergence of the higher from the lower and the deistic view of creation by an external Designer find no support in the *Upaniṣads*. The monistic idea that creation is only an illusory projection is negated by the above definition, and also by the Upaniṣadic statement that Brahman is alone the True, the Self-Conscious

1. *sad eva somyedamagra āsīt. Ch. Up., VI. ii. 1.*

2. *Brahma Sūtras, II. i. 14.*

3. *yatovā imāni bhūtāni jāyante! yena jātāni jīvanti! yamprayantyabhisamviśantīti.—Taitt. Up., III. 1.*

and the Infinite.<sup>4</sup> These three determining qualities define the supreme nature of Brahman by distinguishing it from the ever-changing world of matter and the matter-bound *jīva*, and from the freed and free selves. Brahman is the infinite that finitises itself without losing its infinity and is thus both static and dynamic.

The *Advaitin* distinguishes between *satkāryavāda* or *pariṇāmaravāda* and *vivartavāda* and interprets the text in terms of *vivarta* and not *pariṇāma* (perversion and not transformation). The modifications of the cause are only in name and not in reality. The theory of causal relation is self-contradictory as it says that the cause and the effect are continuous and at the same time separate. The effect viewed as different from the cause is an empirical idea, a twist of thought and a trick of speech, and is therefore a mere illusory appearance. The world of *nāmarūpa* has no existence apart from Brahman which is pure non-differenced being. It is *vivarta* and not *vikāra*, like the rope mistaken for the snake and the silver erroneously perceived in the shell. The *Śruti* itself says that the self is all this, and that there is really no diversity. "He who perceives such diversity goes from death to death."<sup>5</sup> Just as the water in a mirage is non-different from the surface of the salty steppe and as the parts limited by water pots are non-different from the universal ethereal space, Brahman, the cause, is non-different from the world, its effect. The effect is non-existent and the cause alone is real and is self-identical. The world is of such stuff as dreams are made of and

4. satyam jñānam anantam brahma.—*Taitt. Up.*, II. i.

5. neha nānāsti kiñcana | mṛtyossa mṛtyum āpnoti ya iha nāneva paśyati.—*B. U.*, IV. iv. 19 and *Kath. Up.*, II. iv. 11.

has no reality. The diversity caused by names and forms is only a conjurer's trick and Īśvara is an arch-illusionist and even His omniscience is only a case of nescience on a cosmic scale.

Vivartavāda may be interpreted in a variety of ways. The theory of māyā is really founded upon avidyā and adhyāsa and the Advaitin, as a subjective idealist, says that the world is only a mental construction or idea. The so-called external world is only a self-projection and it is merely the vr̥ttis objectified. According to him, the whole universe of cit and acit has its origin in me, is sustained by me and is absorbed in me. I alone am the aggregate of all intelligent subjects. Therefore, what is popularly known as sr̥ṣṭi, sthiti and samhāra is created, sustained and dissolved only by my individual consciousness. The world of space, time and cause is an illusory projection of my idea and a fictitious creation of my avidyā. All idealism ends in subjectivism and solipsism, and this view is the logical conclusion of Advaitic idealism, and if it is accepted, there will be no need for the philosophy of cosmology. But it is rejected by the more moderate Advaitins who recognise the plurality of jīvas and the existence of Īśvara at least as a phenomenal or pragmatic necessity.

The Advaitavādins, who uphold the theory of nānājīva or many souls and the idea of Īśvara, make a distinction between the subjective and the objective aspects of the universe. They posit the proposition that what is true of the anda or macrocosm is also true of the pinda or microcosm which is tersely stated thus: "as within so without"; and they represent two types of monism known as the bimbapratibimbavāda or reflection theory and the apacchedavāda or limitation theory. According

to the *bimbapratibimbavāda*, the Absolute which is pure consciousness somehow reflects itself in the medium of *avidyā* which is cosmic nescience in its individuated form and appears as many *jīvas*, just as there are many reflected images of the same face in different mirrors. According to the second view, the Absolute somehow divides itself into finite centres owing to the *upādhis* or limiting adjuncts. The infinite is, as it were, finitised like the all-pervading *ākāśa* enclosed in a pot.

The *Bhedābheda*vādins attack *māyāvāda* on all fronts and conclude that it contradicts all *pramāṇas* and is spiritually futile. The nature of Brahman can be ascertained only by means of *Śāstra* and *Śāstra* nowhere favours the doctrine of *māyā* or *avidyā*. This doctrine is an alien graft on the *Upaniṣads* and not an inner growth and the *Sad vidyā* on which *Upaniṣadic* cosmology is based does not refer to the illusion theory. The terms *sādeva* and *ārambhaṇa* bring out the fact of causal immanence as *pariṇāma* and not as *vivarta*. If the cause, as the illusionist urges, is real and the effect is false, falsity will infest the cause itself and even the *Veda* will have to be rejected as illusory. *Vedāntins* like Bhāskara, Yādava and Nimbārka, therefore, reject *māyāvāda* in favour of *pariṇāmavāda*. Phenomena change, but they are not fabrications. Bhāskara says that Brahman has a twofold *śakti* known as *jīva**pariṇāma* and *acetana**pariṇāma* by which it becomes the finite centres and the objects of experience. Like the spider weaving its web, the Absolute, which is the unconditioned, transforms itself, owing to the *upādhis*, into the relative or the conditioned and yet it transcends the limitations of finitude. The *jīva* emanates from Brahman and finally enters into it. Yādava rejects the spiritual monism of Bhāskara and



insists on the relation between Brahman and *cit* and *acit* as identity in difference. Difference and non-difference are the dual aspects of reality and are therefore eternally real. *Brahmatva* as pure being or *sanmātra* is the causal unity of the universe with the threefold aspects of *Īśvara*, *cit* and *acit*, persisting as a potentiality in *pralaya* and is the highest generalisation. *Sṛṣṭi* is the self-differentiation of this triune unity into the three aspects like the water of the sea turning itself into waves, foam and bubbles and like clay becoming jars, platters and pitchers. The Absolute becomes *Īśvara*, *jīva* and *acit*, as integral parts of the same unity, and *Īśvara* is less than the Absolute. Nimbārka also explains the origin of the universe as the self-actualisation of *Īśvara*. Brahman is self-related in the *abheda* aspect, but in the *bhedābheda* aspect of creation, there is distinction between *Īśvara*, *cit* and *acit* owing to its immanent *śakti*. *Cit* and *acit* are not only different from Brahman but also depend upon Him as their Lord.

Rānānuja rejects *māyāvāda* and *Brahmaparināma-vāda* and explains cosmology in terms of the *śarīra-śarīrī* relation. He rejects *māyāvāda* as a theory which has all the defects of acosmism and pan-illusionism and which, in its negative movement, may lead to the doctrine of void. *Advaitavāda*, as such, claims to have a logical and scientific basis, and, as every rational explanation is causal, it has to explain how illusion co-exists with Brahman. If Brahman is pure non-differenced consciousness, how does it give rise to cosmic nescience? If even omniscience is nescience on a cosmic scale, then nescience infects its very source and substratum, namely, Brahman, and pan-illusionism will be the only result. *Īśvara* as the reflection of Brahman in *māyā* is conditioned by

*māyā* and cannot be its controller. He is only the sum of the semblances and is the Illusory Highest. Cosmic illusion envelops reality and there is no hope of enlightenment. Likewise the *jīva* as the reflection of Brahman in *avidyā* is only a semblance and not a real entity. If the distinction of *jīvas* is traced to *avidyā* and if distinct *avidyās* are traced to distinct *jīvas*, there arises the fallacy of circular reasoning and mutual dependence (*anyonya āśraya*). The co-existence of Brahman-*jīva* and *māyā-avidyā* involves a duality and dualism which *Advaita* is unable to solve. Besides, no moral philosopher would maintain the view that Brahman deludes itself as an arch-illusionist and deceives the *jīvas* by enacting an unreal play consisting of unreal scenes, actions and audience. To a person dreaming, even his teacher and fellow pupils are fabrications of *avidyā*. If, to avoid the errors of subjectivism and the reflection and the limitation theories, the *Advaitin* as identity philosopher denies the theory of origination and evolution, his view is practically the same as *Śūnyavāda* or the theory of void. On the theory of *apaccheda*, it is not liable to subsequent sublation as no negation can go beyond it. If *Advaita* connotes inseparable relation between Brahman and the world, it allies itself with *Viśiṣṭādvaita*. Rāmānuja condemns *Bhedābheda* with its pancosmic tendency as a vicious theory, which, in effect, finally attributes all the imperfections of life to Brahman. The *upādhis*, whether they are illusory or real (*mithyopādhi* or *satyopādhi*), suffer from the fatal defects of making Brahman the source of all errors and evils.

Rāmānuja explains the *Sad vidyā* by defining the nature of Brahman, *cit* and *acit* as eternally real, but not external to one another. Like the *Bhedābheda*-

*vādins*, he adopts the principle of *satkāryavāda* and says that the same substance enters into different states without losing its substantiality and that the effect is not a substance different from the cause. In the *pralaya* state, the manifold of *cit* and *acit* exists as a real possibility. But it is so subtle that it may be practically treated as non-existent, and, in this sense, the world is non-different from Brahman. But in the condition of *syṣṭi* or effect state, the one *sat* wills to be the many and becomes the many and the non-differentiated becomes differentiated. Consequently, by knowing Brahman, the cause, the effect, namely, the universe, is also known. The process of nature or *prakṛti* is ever changing and is subject to the laws of *pariṇāma*. Owing to the spiritual freedom of the *jīva*, it subjects itself to expansion and self-limitation, but Brahman is ever free and perfect. He is the *upādānakāraṇa* and the *nimittakāraṇa*, the material cause as well as the instrumental cause of the universe. He is the first cause and the final cause. He enters into the universe as its inner self and at the same time transcends its imperfections. The process of nature is for the progress of the *jīva* so that it may become finally *brahmanised*.

The order of creation as set forth in the *Śruti* and the *Vedānta Śāstra* may now be explained in some detail. In the light of the principle of *pariṇāma*, the law of *karma* and the immanent purpose of *Īśvara*, *prakṛti* exists for consciousness and not in consciousness. This *prakṛti* is called *avidyā*, as it obstructs the knowledge of Brahman, and is called *māyā*, as it connotes the wonders of creation.<sup>6</sup> In *pralaya*, it is undifferentiated and in

6. *māyān tu prakṛtim vidyāt—Śv. Up., IV. 10.*

creation it begins to energise and evolve into *mahat* including the three states of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. *Mahat* changes into *ahaṅkāra*, including the three aspects of *vaikārika*, *aijasa* and *bhūtādi*. From the first emanate the ten cognitive and the conative sense organs or *jñānendriyas* and *karmendriyas*. The inner sense organ, namely, *manas*, is the co-ordinating organ of knowledge and it functions as *ahaṅkāra*, *citta* and *buddhi*. The first, i.e., *ahaṅkāra*, is due to the false identification of *āman* with the body. The second is the desire for a sense-object and the third is what discriminates the true from the false. The *indriyas* accompany the *jīva* till it attains *mukti*. From *bhūtādi* evolve the cosmic factors of the five subtle elements or *tanmātras* and the gross elements or the *bhūtas*. Of these elements, air springs from ether, fire from air, water from fire and earth from water.<sup>7</sup>

The creation of the elements and the sense organs is the collective aspect or *samaṣṭi*, which precedes the *vyāṣṭi* aspect. The principle underlying this process is called *trvṛtkarāṇa* or *pañcīkarāṇa*. It connotes the inclusion of all the qualities in all the five elements and the unity of the cosmic order. Each of them is divided into two parts and one part of each is combined with one-eighth of the remaining elements; and in every substance in the universe, the one or the other element preponderates though all the others are present and they constitute the world of name and form. Brahman enters into prakṛti with the collective soul or Brahmā and produces all beings including gods, human beings and sub-

7. akāśād vāyuh| vāyoragnih| agner āpah adbhyaḥ prthivī.—  
Taitt. Up., II. 1.

human beings. Each *jīva* is eternal and persists in its own nature even in *pralāya* in a subtle state and in *śṛṣṭi*, *Īśvara* bestows bodies and sense organs on each *jīva* according to its *karma* and enters into it as its inner ruler. Every new *śṛṣṭi* is but a repetition of the previous cosmic order. Before creation, the Vedic ideas were intuited by the creator as the first-born of the Absolute and he creates the thinking things and objects of thought in the light of his intuitive insight. Nature acts in a uniform way and even gods like Indra and Varuṇa persist with their characteristics as archetypes, though, as individuals, they come and go. Indras come and go but *Indratva* remains. *Pralāya* and *śṛṣṭi* bring out the rhythmic enfolding and unfolding of the cosmos and the cosmic procession is for the making of souls by the moulding of matter. The apparent cruelty and caprice that prevail in the moral world are traceable to the *karma* of the *jīva*; and *Īśvara*, the Inner Ruler of all, dispenses justice impartially according to individual desert. Ultimately, *pralāya* and *śṛṣṭi* reveal the sportive spontaneity of *Īśvara* as the divine artist. The theory of creation is reinterpreted and it becomes the act of recreation in which the artist enacts the divine comedy and enjoys the bliss of the creation of the *jīvas* with a view to shaping them into His own image.

The cosmology of the *Upaniṣads* rejects entirely the *asatkāryavāda* of the *Vaiśeṣika* and his atomic theory of the origin of the universe. His radical pluralism reduces the world-order into a multiverse without any underlying unity and the idea of an external designer denies the reality of divine immanence. The *Sāṅkhya* no doubt accepts *satkāryavāda*, and in his cosmological account, he expounds the evolution of the cosmos, but he ignores

the creative function of the Inner Ruler. The various theories of emanation and emergence held by the *Bhedābheda*vādins attribute imperfections to the Absolute and thus make Īśvara Himself a glorified *samsārin* who has an infinity of evils in His nature. The illusion theory says that the Absolute somehow divides or seems to divide itself into finite centres, but is unable to explain why the Absolute appears as the many.

Cosmology arouses wonder and a sense of holy mystery. Though all *Vedāntins* agree in describing the *praḷaya* state as the absence of the differentiation of *nāmarūpa*, they differ in their accounts of *śṛṣṭi*. They attribute creation to *māyā*, the *upādhis* or the *pariṇāma śakti* in Brahman or to *karma*. From the ethico-religious point of view, the exposition of Rāmānuja has the merit of maintaining the purity of Brahman by tracing the imperfections of life to the moral freedom of the self and of providing a common ground for the meeting of the extremes of monism and theism. The *Advaitin* accepts pragmatically the reality of the cosmic order and its Ruler and his thesis agrees with Rāmānuja's in accepting the direct import of *tajjala*. From the spiritual standpoint, there is no doubt that the endless procession of the space-time world is for the progression of the self and its final attainment of perfection. The next chapter seeks to define the nature and characteristics of the self or *jīva*.

#### IV. UPANIṢADIC PSYCHOLOGY

*Upaniṣadic* psychology has a metaphysical and spiritual background and is therefore different from the theories which are founded upon mere empirical and rational methods. In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, Indra seeks from Prajāpati the knowledge of the nature of the eternal self that is different from its changing states of waking consciousness, dreams and dreamless sleep.<sup>1</sup> In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, Yājñavalkya expounds to King Janaka the psychology of the three *avasthas* or psychical states and the way to overcome evil.<sup>2</sup> In the *Kāthopaniṣad*, Naciketas desires to know from the God of Death the nature of the self and the meaning of immortality.<sup>3</sup>

The *Upaniṣadic* method of solving this problem is that of self-realisation through self-renunciation and spiritual induction as opposed to the logical method of elimination. The spiritual aspirant gradually realises that the self is different from the body, gross and subtle, *prāṇa* or vital air, sensation and reason. It is not a fleeting flux of psycho-physical states, but is eternally and essentially blissful.

A brief account of the rival theories, which look plausible, may be given before the correct theory or the *siddhānta* is stated. First, there is the view of the *Dehātma-vādins* and the *Indriyātma-vādins*, who say that the *ātman* is the body or the sense organs. What is

1. *Ch. Up.*, VIII. vii.

2. *Bṛ. Up.*, IV. iii.

3. *Kāth. Up.*, I. i. 20.

called *ātman* is, to them, only the configuration of elements or the aggregate of physical changes which is dissolved at death. Consciousness can be explained mechanically as an epi-phenomenon or bye-product of nature without resorting to any supernatural or spiritual explanation. The brain is said to secrete thought as the liver secretes bile. Self-consciousness emerges gradually from matter or *prakṛti*. The self is said to be a late arrival in the process of evolution. But this is the view of the materialist or *Lokāyatika*, and its vital defect is its failure to explain the primacy, if not the priority, of the moral and spiritual consciousness. The physico-chemical sciences can explain only the nature of the visible and tangible universe. They fail to explain the nature of self-consciousness and the striving for the moral or spiritual values of life. The self is quite different from the gross body consisting of the twenty-four *tattvas*, gross and subtle. While the self is aware of the sensations, the sensations have no such self-consciousness.

Next there are the *Prāṇātmavādins* who go a step further and contend that the *prāṇa* is the self. The *Upaniṣad* brings out this view by the story of the speech, mind and the senses contesting for supremacy with *prāṇa* and proving by the *anvaya vyatireka* method or positive and negative test, that *prāṇa* alone maintains life.<sup>4</sup> It alone has vital power or creative activity which is capable of self-origination and self-multiplication. *Prāṇa-vāda* is more comprehensive than the atomic or materialistic theory, because no machine is self-creative or has the power of self-origination like the vital impulse.

4. *Bṛ. Up.*, VI. i and *Kauṣ. Up.*, II. xiv.



But it does not go far enough, as consciousness cannot originate from *prāṇa*. Therefore, the psychologist says that consciousness is more comprehensive than matter or life. The theory is more concrete than the physical theory of atoms and the biological theory of life. To the psychologist, the self is a series of perishing psychical presentations.

The Buddhist as a *Kṣāṇikavijñānavādīn* denies the existence of the self or *ātman* and explains it away as a mere perishing psycho-physical series without any substantiality or stability. The self is not a static being but a ceaseless becoming though it seems to be a single entity. It consists of five *skandhas*, namely, *rūpa* (form), *vedana* (feeling), *samjñā* (perception), *samskāra* (will) and *viññāna* (reason). It is a series of momentary sensations without any permanence. But this view is untenable as it cuts at the very root of personal identity based on the fact of recognition or memory. As the *Upaniṣad* says, the speaker is different from speech and the *mantr* from *manas*. The self persists in its own being in spite of all its momentary mental modifications and to depersonalise the self is to decapitate it. Abnormal psychology no doubt refers to dissociation or dispersal of personality, but the science of *yoga* based on metapsychics describes the possibility of realising the personal identity of the self as distinct from its psychic changes.

It is therefore true to say that there can be no psychology without the psyche, just as there can be no play of *Śākuntala* without Śakuntalā. The rationalist therefore goes further and affirms that reason is more comprehensive than the atom, soul or sensation and that it is *sui generis*. As the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* holds,

*viññāna* is a higher category than matter, life or consciousness.<sup>5</sup> It is the self that sustains the senses and synthesises their functions. The rationalist defines the self as a rational being and posits the rationality of the universe. It is reason that distinguishes man from the plant and the animal and makes him the crown of evolutionary progress. But reason is not the final category of reality because it often starts with doubt and ends with scepticism. The rationalist is oppressed by the ultimate mystery of all things and develops finally an agnostic, if not a sceptical, attitude towards life. The self can never be discovered by syllogistic thinking. The Jaina goes a step further and affirms the existence of a plurality of *jīvas* forming a monadic hierarchy from the plant to the perfect self. The *ātman* is therefore different from the logical intellect and, from the *Vedāntic* point of view, is different from the western terms, spirit, soul and self, as they are not free from the defects of animism and the riddles of the mind-body theories. The *ātman* can be realised by *yogic* introversion as eternally effulgent and blissful, and this truth is capable of verification by a process of spiritual induction. The existence of the self as different from the body is an indubitable fact of spiritual experience.

As contrasted with these, *Vedānta* affirms the eternity of the self as opposed to the theory of its sudden creation or dissolution and defines it as the subject having cognition, conation and feeling as its functions and not as a mere *ābhāsa* or reflection of *buddhi*. It persists as a monadic being or *anu* in all states and cannot be explained away as a mere metaphor or as an *anuvāda*.

The process of thought implies the thought of the process and also the thinking self as its subject. The 'I' persists in all mental states as a pervading identity and not as a mere connection of content, and there is no self-contradiction between one state and another. On the other hand, among the *Āstika* philosophers, the *Sāṅkhya* accepts *Vedic* authority and says that the *puruṣa* is *niravayava* (formless) and *nirguṇa* (attributeless) and a silent solitary self, but it is a witness that witnesses nothing. It is emptied of all content and is abstract. The *Vaiśeṣika* holds that intelligence is produced by the conjunction of the self with the mind. This conjunction is purely adventitious and intelligence is not an essential quality of the self. This view makes the *ātman* mechanical. *Vedānta* insists on the moral freedom of the *ātman* and its self-sovereignty and is opposed to the method of depersonalising it and denying its spontaneity.

*Advaita* combats the theistic idea of the self as a separate personality. According to it the atomic and monadic nature of the self is metaphorical and not metaphysical. Owing to the superimposition of the quality of *buddhi* on *ātman*, *ātman* appears to be monadic though it is really infinite. It is fictitiously hypostatized by *buddhi*, its limiting adjunct. *Antaḥkaraṇa*, which is the false limiting adjunct of the *ātman*, is variously described as *manas* when it is in a doubting state, *citta*, the fleeting psychosis, *buddhi*, the state of determination, and *ahaṅkāra*, the sense of egoity. The idea of agency arises from *avidyā* and is not of the essential nature of the *ātman*, which is the one non-dual pure consciousness. Just as light appears straight or bent owing to its passing through a medium, pure intelligence affected by *avidyā* seems to act and feel though it is ever free from nescience.

The *jīva* appears to be a finite self which has the qualities of knowing, feeling and willing ; it works with the tools of thought, suffers from sorrow and migrates in the world of *samsāra*. But when the darkness of *avidyā* is dispelled, it knows that it is Brahman which is ever partless and perfect. This view, it should be emphasised, has no support in the *Upaniṣads* or in the *Sūtras* expounding them as they insist on the eternity of the self and its moral and spiritual freedom.

The *Upaniṣadic* view of *karma* is opposed to fatalism and predeterminism on the one hand and mere indeterminism on the other. It attributes the imperfections of life to the finite self. The *ātman* has somehow fallen from its *Brahmabhāva* but it retains the will to free itself from the causality of *karma* or *samsāra* and regain its divine nature. It is essentially blissful and its threefold sorrows arising from natural, moral and supernatural causes are traceable to the career of sensuality and sin, which it has chosen. The pessimistic view that the *ātman* suffers from the will to live and from innate sinfulness is foreign to the *Upaniṣads*.

The *jīva* is essentially a knowing subject and is not mere intelligence or non-intelligence. The theory of pure consciousness, without a self to integrate the conscious processes, is as unthinkable as that of a self whose consciousness is adventitious or occasional. Consciousness presupposes an entity that persists in all states and gives a meaning to their unity and continuity ; and there can be no self without consciousness as its essence. It shines by itself like the light of a luminous body. Consciousness is always out there in the self whether it is latent or patent. Though the self is infinitesimal or monadic, its consciousness is infinite and all-pervading.

The individual soul is to be known as part of the hundredth part of the point of a hair divided a hundred times but yet it is also infinite.<sup>6</sup> Even the monist who has to accept the fact of *sarvamukti* has to concede the existence of a plurality of *jīvas* at least as a working hypothesis. The freedom of the self is a moral and religious necessity as no *Vedic* duty or *Vedāntic upāsana* is possible without such freedom and responsibility. The text in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, "If the slayer thinks he slays the *ātman* and if the slain thinks he is slain, they both do not understand the truth,"<sup>6a</sup> affirms the indestructibility of the self and does not deny its agency.

To say that agency belongs to *prakṛti* or *manas* is to deny the reality of the moral and spiritual endeavour of the *mumukṣu* and his achievement of freedom. *Prakṛti* does not meditate on *mukti* or attain it. The self is by nature blissful and all its misery is traceable to its false identification with the body and its fall from its blissful state in the world of Brahman.

The self abides in its own being and persists in all the three states of consciousness, of waking, dream and dreamless sleep, and its self-identity may be obscured by *karma* but is never destroyed. The *jīva* in the waking state suffers from the ills of *samsāra* in accordance with its *karma*; in the intermediate state called the dream the Self shapes its desires. There are no chariots in that state. no horses, no roads; no happiness, joy and so on as He himself creates all these.<sup>7</sup> According to

6. valāgra śatabhāgasya śatadhā kalpitasya ca |  
bhāgo jīvas sa viññeyah sa cānantyāya kalpyate' *Śvet Up.*, V. 9.

6a. *Kaṭh. Up.* I. ii 19

7. na tatra rathā na rathayoga na pantnāno bhavanti atha  
athān rathayogān pathah sṛjate sa hi kartha—*Br. Up.*, IV iii 10.

*Advaita*, the dream world is a mere phantom or *māyā* as it does not fit in with the whole of reality or the world of space-time-cause and as it is sublated by the waking state; even the so-called physical world is not absolutely real as it is sublated in the *turiya* state. The non-*Advaitins* oppose this view on the ground that the world of space-time is real and is divinely ordained. They argue thus: the pleasures and pains of the dream state follow the moral law of *karma* and the rules of the lawgiver; as Śaṅkara himself admits, it is the Highest Self that rules the self in all its states. Rāmānuja accordingly gives a moral interpretation of the terms *māyā* and *avidyā* by equating *avidyā* with *karma* and thus invests the whole of experience with moral and religious seriousness. 'Life is real, life is earnest'. It is better to say that the dream states are real and have the same morally constraining power and purpose as the waking state, than to say that the waking state is unreal like dreams. In deep sleep, there are no dreams and no subject-object consciousness; and the sleeper, obscured by *avidyā*, puts off all instruments of knowledge and action, rests on the bosom of the Infinite and refreshes himself. "Whatever these creatures are here, whether a lion, or a wolf, or a boar, or a mosquito, that they become again on ~~waking~~ waking."<sup>8</sup> In a state of swoon occasioned, for example, by a blow on the head, there is no consciousness and it is a 'half-way house' to death.<sup>9</sup> At

8. *Ch. Up.*, VI. x. 2.

9. The analysis of the three *avasthas*, waking, dream and dreamless sleep as successive stages in the *Advaitic* process of progressive abstraction and sublation leading to the transcendental state of *turiya* is open to the charge of subjectivism and it ignores the reality of the cosmic order and its divine ruler.

the time of death, the heart is illumined and the self moves out and is followed by its conscious quality, *karma* and its memory stored up in the subtle body. Like the caterpillar that, after reaching the end of a blade of grass,<sup>10</sup> finds another place of support and then draws itself towards it, the self, when it leaves the body, finds a place of support and then draws itself towards it. The evolution of the self is determined by the nature of its character. Good deeds are rewarded and one who has done *punya karma* ascends to *svarga* and enjoys the pleasures arising from one's good deeds and is born again in good surroundings. The evil-doer goes to a dark and joyless region and when the effect of the evil deed is exhausted, he is born again as a low creature.<sup>11</sup> The eschatological ideas of the *Upaniṣads* are fully developed in the conception of two paths known as *pitṛ-yāna* (the way of the Fathers) and *arcirādimārga* or *devayāna* (the way of the gods).<sup>12</sup> Those who do good deeds ascend by the path of smoke, the night and the dark half of the month to the world of the *pitṛs* and finally to the moon and then they descend to the sky and the cloud and rain and are born again. But those who seek Brahman, ascend to the world of Brahman by the shining path of the sun and are freed for ever from the sorrows of *samsāra*.

The relation between *ātman* and *Paramātman* requires exact determination. According to the *Māyāvādin*, *avidyā* is an inner obscuring something, by which the one self

10. *Br. Up.*, IV. iv. 3.

11. *tadya iha ramanīya caranā abhyāśo ha yat te ramanīyām yonim āpadyeran...ya iha kapūya caranā abhyāśo ha yat te kapūyām yonim āpadyeran.*—*Ch. Up.*, V. x. 7.

12. *Ch. Up.*, V. x. 1 to 4 and *Br. Up.*, VI. ii. 15 & 16.

imagines itself to be the many and appears as manifold. The self is a mere apparition of the Absolute and its three states bring out the self-contradiction between its existence and content. Its atomic or monadic nature is a hypostatisation of *buddhi* or the limiting adjunct of *avidyā*. *Atman* is essentially the Absolute and this truth is realised in *mukti* or *disillusionment*. The term *amśa* or part of Brahman means part 'as it were' of Brahman as Brahman is impartible and non-differenced intelligence. This view cuts at the very root of moral and spiritual progress and makes *mukti* itself a make-believe. To say that *jñāna* sublates *ajñāna* and also sublates itself is a case of negating negation and has no meaning or value. The limitation theory is a more moderate type of *Advaita* because it invests the finitising process of the infinite with some reality. Brahman with super-excellent limiting adjuncts rules the *jīvas* with inferior adjuncts. This view marks the transition to *Bhedā-bhedavāda* which makes the *upādhis* real limiting adjuncts and not an illusory process. Brahman is perfect and unconditioned but owing to the limitations of the *upādhis* and the complex of *avidyā*, *kāma* and *karma*, the psycho-physical complex, it becomes finite. The *Vedāntic* term *amśa* refers to the real principle of individuation that is due to the *upādhis* in the Absolute. But even this view destroys the freedom of the finite self. The emanation theory (*Brahmapariṇāmavāda*) therefore says that the finite self is not a phantom of the Absolute, but is a real fact or factor which has formal distinctness of its own in the empirical as well as the emancipated state. It is identical with the Absolute and yet different from it and thus the emanation theory provides both for the monistic and the pluralistic needs of



philosophy. The Absolute is both the one and the many and owing to the *pariṇāma śakti* in Brahman, the static becomes dynamic and Brahman becomes *Īśvara* and the finite centres. Even this view explains away the personality of the finite self and its moral and spiritual autonomy. The theistic pluralists, however, go to the other extreme and affirm the eternal distinction between *jīva* and *Īśvara* and their externality. *Īśvara* is self-dependent and extra-mundane and though He comes into personal relation with the self, He is absolutely distinct from it. The *jīva* is always dependent upon *Īśvara* and there is a contrast between the omnipotence and omniscience of *Īśvara* and the impotence and nescience of the *jīva*. But this view does not fully bring out the immanence of God in the finite self and the reality of its mystic intimacy. The *śarīra-śarīrī* theory of Rāmānuja seeks to remove the defects of the other theories by regarding the *ātman* as the finite self but with infinite intelligence and defines Brahman as the *śarīrī*<sup>13</sup> or the source and sustenance of the *jīva*. While the *jīva* suffers from finitude and sorrow, *Īśvara* is the infinite that is eternally blissful and can infinitise the nature of the *jīva*. The self is not to be spatialised or given an empiric dress, but is eternal and free and Brahman is the life of its life and the ultimate subject of consciousness and is the meaning of all its endeavour. The self or *prakāra* is logically distinguishable from Brahman, its *prakārī*, but is spiritually inseparable from it. The *jīva* is not an appearance or limitation of the Absolute, but is an

13. *ya ātmani tisthan ātmanontaro yamātmā na veda yasyātmā śarīram ya ātmānam antaro yamayati sa ta ātmāntaryāmyamrt ah.—Br. Up., V. vii. 22 (Mādhyandīna),*

organ of the All-Self and it lives, moves and has its being in the self-communicating love of the All-Self. This theory reconciles all the extremes of idealism and realism, and of monism and pluralism and it has the merit of satisfying the metaphysical, moral and mystic needs of life. The relation between Brahman and *ātman* is not to be conceived in terms of cause and effect, substance and quality, whole and parts which are after all categories of the understanding, but in the spiritual language of inseparability and intimacy. The analogies of the soul and the body, light and its luminosity, the flower and its fragrance are but devices of the intellect to portray the unity of the *ātman* and *Paramātmān* and their union. While psychology describes the process of the empirical self or the *jīva*, ethics deals with the *jīva* or *ātman* as it ought to be and the next chapter develops this normative aspect of conduct.

## V. THE ETHICS OF THE UPANIṢADS

The ethics of the *Upaniṣads* deals with the moral endeavour of the *jīva* to free itself from the obscurations, allurements and contractions of *avidyā*, *kāma* and *karma*, and to realise Brahman as the supreme goal of life, and it also furnishes the most inspiring motive for conduct in its individual and social aspects. The *Vedāntin* is at once a metaphysician, moralist and mystic. He is more interested in the synthetic insight into the soul of things than in the analytic method of discovering distinctions. To him the different branches of philosophy, like metaphysics, ethics and religion, are vitally related; they form logically an integral whole and are distinguishable, but not divisible. In this sense, *Vedāntic* ethics is not a separate science as in Western thought, but is merged in the system of *Vedānta* as a whole. To satisfy the demands of practical reason, the system of *Vedāntic* ethics may, however, be studied by itself to bring out its essential features. The metaphysician, who has a critical knowledge of epistemology, ontology and cosmology should develop into a *mumukṣu* seeking *mukti* or emancipation from the cycle of *samsāra*. The method followed in this study is different from that of most modern expositors of *Upaniṣadic* ethics. They adopt the Western view of ethical history, and trace the evolution of the moral standard from heteronomy and theonomy to autonomy, and they conclude that *Vedānta* is on the whole deficient in the principle of autonomy. The rule for conduct was at first heteronomy, viz., the law of man as in the *Taittirīyopaniṣad* "Follow the wise man", then it became theonomy or the law of God as

in the *Kāṭhōpaniṣad*, viz., 'the fear of God makes all gods do their work.' The idea of moral autonomy was fully appreciated only in the later days of the *Gītā*.<sup>1</sup> It also rejects some theories of absolutism which dwell on the self-contradiction between the actual and the ideal, and between action and knowledge and which favour the false ascetic view of exit from life and world negation as the goal of conduct. The true ethics of the *Upaniṣads* expounds the way of self-purification through self-renunciation leading to the goal of *Brahmajñāna*, and it insists on the innate spiritual worth of man and the solidarity of life in all its levels from the amoeba to the *amara*. It deals with the nature of *karma* in its psychological and ethical aspects and insists on the disinterested performance of duty or *dharma* without any hedonistic or utilitarian considerations. In its social aspect, *Vedāntic* ethics insists on the performance of *dharma* and refers to the duties of man to others like parents, teachers, gods and society in general and solves the dualism between egoism and altruism.

The chief requisite of the *mumukṣu* is the practice of self-renunciation or *vairāgya* and the effort to free himself from the evils of *ahaṅkāra* and then to realise the true *aham*. His ideal of conduct is self-realisation through self-renunciation. The *Sūtras*, following the way of the *Upaniṣads*, insist on the need for *vairāgya* arising from a reflection on the impermanence of worldly life. Owing to the confusions of *avidyā* and the contradictions of *karma*, the *jīva* is caught up in the triple fetters of *avidyā*, *kāma* and *karma* and the miseries of

1. Ranade: *Constructive Survey of Upaniṣadic Philosophy*, p. 290.

metempsychosis. *Karma* is both good and evil and is never lost, but is conserved in the psycho-physical body that accompanies the *jīva* in its *samsāric* career. When the physical body is dissolved after death, the good soul ascends with the psychic apparatus to the plane of the *devas* and enjoys the pleasures of *svarga*. But it has no freedom there, as it has to minister slavishly to the needs of the *devas*. When the effect of the good deeds is exhausted, the *jīva* is hurled down once again into the world of *karma* and its next birth is determined by the moral tendencies stored up in the psychic body and they constitute the predisposing cause of its next birth. The wicked soul suffers at death from hellish pains and when the evil is exhausted by expiation, it also enters into a new body in accordance with its *karma*. Every one acts according to *karma*, but the *mumukṣu* alone is conscious of its consequences and when he reflects on the trivial and transient values of worldly life, he longs to obtain freedom from the clutches of *karma* and the wheel of *samsāra*. Mundane existence is a tragic waste. It is futile and weary. Youth fades away like a mushroom ; manhood vanishes in a moment. Fame lasts only for a second and life itself ends in death. Every pleasure is fraught with pain and hope itself leads to despair. Even from the point of view of knowledge, there is really no scope for optimism. Science and philosophy vainly knock at the gate of knowledge and scepticism grows with increasing knowledge. The active man who turns away from philosophic thought and dedicates himself to world welfare withers away in work and worry and knows at the end that the world is like the dog's curly tail which can never be straightened, and the attainment of the millennium is only moonshine. The artist

merely delights in dreams and empty imaginings. Thus the *avidyā*-ridden self imprisoned in the world of *karma* is tormented by the pairs of opposites like pleasure and pain, and desire and aversion and it realises at last the hazards and hardships of earthly life and longs for the stability and security of *mukti*.

*Advaita* traces the source of evil and suffering to *avidyā*, defined as the innate obscuration of pure consciousness. *Avidyā*, somehow, distorts the one and divides it into the many and thus creates a confusion in the mind between reality and its appearance or apparition. This misunderstanding is called *adhyāsa* and is illustrated by the rope-snake analogy. Pure consciousness or *sat-cit-ānanda* is eternal, self-effulgent bliss, but is somehow mistaken for the empirical self or *anātmā* which is *anṛta*, *jaḍa* and *duḥka*, a perishing and sorrow-ridden thing, and it is this false identification with the *anātmā*, called *abhimāna* that is the cause of all the pairs of opposites like good and evil, pleasure and pain, love and hatred and the cycle of *samsāra*. The pleasures of life are mere semblances without any stability. The ills of *samsāra* are traceable to *karma*, *abhimāna*, *adhyāsa* and finally to *avidyā*. *Avidyā* is indeterminable as it cannot be explained as *sat* (being), *asat* (non-being) or *sat-asat* (being-non-being), and to seek for the cause of *avidyā* is illegitimate as the causal category has only an empirical and not a transcendental use. The inconceivable is, however, conceived differently by different Advaitins. To the illusionist, *avidyā* is an apparition or a magical show; to the phenomenalist, it is a fact of finiteness which is empirical; to still others it is the statement of the self-contradictions of life in the world of space-time-cause and to the identity philosopher it is

non-existent like the flower in the sky. It is a phantom, phenomenon, self-discrepancy or bare negation. It is overcome by *jñāna* which may be explained as transcendental experience or sublation of *avidyā*. The *ātman* appears as *anātman*, and it is only by *jñāna* that the illusion or defect is removed. The performance of *karma* is only indirectly helpful to the *mumukṣu* in apprehending Brahman as it clarifies the mind and makes it conclude that the only utility of *karma* is to know its futility and destructibility.

Bhāskara refutes the theory of *avidyā* on the ground that the stultification of *ajñāna* by *jñāna* is as inconceivable as the origin of existence. *Ajñāna* should be either prior to *jñāna*, present along with it or it is bare negation. It cannot precede *jñāna* as consciousness is presupposed even in its denial and its antecedent non-existence is inconceivable. It cannot co-exist with *jñāna* as the two are contradictory, and bare denial is meaningless. *Jñāna* is essentially relational and non-relational consciousness is non-existent like the square-circle. *Avidyā* is not a fictitious, but a real, limiting adjunct of reality and may be described as the principle of individuation or the finitising power of the infinite. The *upādhi* is a psycho-physical complex made of *avidyā-kāma-karma* conditioning the unconditioned and implicating the *jīva* in the errors, evils and other imperfections of its empirical life. The *mumukṣu* seeks to retrace the steps and ascend to his home in the Absolute by means of *jñāna-karma samuccaya* or the co-ordination of *jñāna* and *karma*. While the *Mīmāṃsaka* insists on the performance of duty or *karma* or explains away the value of *jñāna* as mere *arthavāda*, the *Advaitin* goes to the other extreme and abandons *karma* altogether as his

philosophy of self-identity is opposed to ethical dualism. But the *Bhedābheda* avoids these extremes of activism and asceticism by rationalising *karma* and energising *jñāna* and thus correlating the claims of will and thought. The barriers to *mukti* are intellectual as well as moral and wisdom consists in utilising the insight afforded by *jñāna* and the dynamic element of activism or *niṣkāma karma* and attaining the bliss of unitive life. According to Yādavaprakāśa, Brahman, by His *pariṇāmaśakti*, emanates into *Īśvara*, *cit* and *acit*; and the *jīva*, dissatisfied with its isolation, longs to escape from the fetters of *karma* and enter into *bhedābheda* relation with Brahman. Thus all the schools of *Advaita* and *Bhedābheda* trace the source of imperfection to Brahman itself, whether it is defined in terms of *avidyā*, *upādhis* or *pariṇāmaśakti*.

Rāmānuja objects to these views and offers a solution. He attributes all change, imperfection and suffering to the *jīva* and defines Brahman as the pure and perfect self. *Advaita* affirms that Brahman itself is under the illusive influence of beginningless *avidyā*. To Bhāskara, Brahman is conditioned by limiting adjuncts. Yādava makes Brahman experience the sufferings arising from *karma*. But, to Rāmānuja, Brahman has an infinity of perfections and it is the *jīva* that is accountable for all the ills of life. He reinterprets *avidyā*, *upādhis* and *pariṇāmaśakti* in terms of *karma* and the moral responsibility of the finite self. The law of *karma* admits of a psychological explanation in the light of the principle of causality and moral interpretation based on the affirmation of the freedom of the will. From the scientific standpoint, every act or *karma* is determined by the environment and the disposition or *guṇas* of the individual and



is subject to the rigour of causal necessity. From the religious or mystic aspect, every act of man is divinely ordained, as *Īśvara* is the real actor in the world of *līlā*. But, morally, the doer is greater than his deeds, since he has the freedom to determine his future and he is free but for himself. Though he cannot undo his *prārabdhā karma* or *karma* which has begun to bear fruit, he can conquer the *sañcita karma*, attain moral autonomy and shape his destiny. *Karma* in the broad sense of the term includes not only overt action, but desires or ideas of ends. Good *karma* connotes purity of thought, word and deed and expresses the consistency between what is thought, what is said and what is done. There is really no conflict between the motive or the inner attitude and intention and the outer action and even if there is a conflict between the two, inner purity is preferable to mere conformity to an external law. What is good may be pleasant, but what is pleasant is not necessarily good. It is on this anti-hedonistic standpoint that Naciketas in the *Kāthopaniṣad* rejects the boons like longevity, beauty and earthly sovereignty offered to him by the God of Death and prefers the good (*śreyas*) to the pleasant (*preyas*).<sup>2</sup> Goodness implies self-sovereignty and the good or wise man like a skilful charioteer has control over the unruly senses that run after the pleasures of the senses. Self-realisation is the supreme goal of life and not the attainment of sense-pleasures. In the famous dialogue between sage Yājñavalkya and his wife, Maitreyī, in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, Maitreyī tells

2. anyatra śreyah anyad utaiva preyah te ubhe nānārthe puruṣam sinītaḥ | tayoś śreya ādadānasya sādhu bhavati hīyate arthāḥ ya u preyo vṛñīte ||—*Kath. Up.*, II. 1.

her lord that she prefers eternal life and love to the ephemeral wealth offered by him and he then utters these words of wisdom: "The husband is dear not on account of the husband but on account of the *ātman* or the Highest Self."<sup>3</sup> The term *ātman* is to be interpreted as the Highest Self. The aim of self-realisation is not egoistic satisfaction but the satisfaction of *Paramātmā* or the Highest Self. It is by seeking the infinite that we get infinite satisfaction. Human love is not to be shunned or spurned in a spirit of egoism or false asceticism, but is to be treated as a partial expression of divine love. Love, truth, goodness and peace are eternal values of life that are conserved in the self. In ethical effort there is a harmonious blending of feeling, thought and action which satisfies the highest ideals of the mystic, the contemplative man and the man of action. Moral and spiritual perfection presupposes the endeavour to realise the end as well as the end to be accomplished and this view avoids the defects of hedonism and rationalism. Brahman is the perfect self and perfection is the gradual realisation of the perfect self. In this way, *Upaniṣadic* ethics leads the aspirant step by step from wickedness to goodness and from goodness to godliness and thus enables him to realise that the supreme end of conduct is not only the attainment of goodness, but the realisation of God as the soul of goodness. The Absolute is beyond good and evil in the sense that it is ever perfect and free from the limitations of *karma*. It is supra-moral and not less than moral. The term 'evil' has three meanings, physical, moral and religious, and connotes res-

3. na vā are patyuh kāmāya patih priyo bhavatyātmanastu kāmāya patih priyo bhavati.—*Bṛ. Up.* IV. v. 6.

pectively suffering, moral taint and sinfulness. In the first sense, evil means suffering externally or centrally originated or caused by things outside or by celestials above ; but every case of suffering may not be the result of moral evil as the sorrows caused by self-sacrifice and love are cheerfully courted. Moral evil arises from the violation of the moral law or of the imperatives of duty and it deepens into sin when it is a transgression of duty laid down as a divine command. Sin is ultimately a fall or lapse from divine life and connotes self-alienation from God and though its origin is logically unaccountable or inconceivable, it can be cured and therefore it has an end.

The practical side of *Upaniṣadic* ethics or applied ethics is of vital importance to the moral person who desires to know what is good, to do good, to be good and thus to become godly. Virtue and duty are the inner and outer sides of every moral act. The *Upaniṣads* insist more on inner purity and righteousness than on the rights of man or mere conformity to passing convention. The nature of duty or *dharma* cannot be rationally demonstrated. The essence of goodness comes from God who alone is all good. Duty is a divine command. It is the voice of God in the inner moral consciousness or the self. The moral consciousness is rooted in the philosophic view that Reality is essentially good, and culminates in the religious conviction that Reality is the *ātman* in us that is righteous and makes for righteousness. The *Upaniṣadic* commandments as imperatives of duty are more comprehensive than the Sermon on the Mount and more concrete and significant than the Buddhistic code of eightfold virtues. The specific duties of every man are determined by his station in life. In

this way, ethics is related to metaphysics and religion on the one side and to psychology and sociology on the other.

A *brahmacāri* who finishes his studies and becomes a householder or *grhastā* is taught the basic truth of the solidarity of man and the duties that a social man owes to the divinely ordained universe consisting of gods, *pitṛs*, teachers and fellow beings, which has given him the rights of life, education and freedom. Among the imperatives of duty deduced from this truth are the following: Worship your parents and *pitṛs* as God; worship your teacher and guests as God; do not swerve from the truth and the study of the *Veda*.<sup>4</sup> According to the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, Prajāpati repeats *Da* thrice to the *devas*, *asuras* and men; it is interpreted as *dāmyata*, *dayadhvam* and *datta* respectively.<sup>5</sup> The celestials with the *sāttvika* quality predominant in them think that they are taught self-control. The *asuras* with the 'dark' (*tāmasic*) quality construe it as an injunction that they should practise *dayā* or pity and men with the *rājasika* quality explain it as a command to them that they ought to practise charity. In this way the three virtues of self-mastery, mercy to all beings and charity are taught to three types of people according to their qualities. The *Upaniṣads* insist on the practice of truth as a cardinal virtue as is illustrated in the case of Satyākāma who told the truth about his birth to his *guru*. To be perfect even as God is perfect is the supreme moral ideal of every person and, because the self is perfect by

4. satyam vada | dharmam cara | svādhyāyānmā pramadaḥ | ...  
mātr devo bhava | pitṛ devo bhava | ācārya devo bhava | atithi  
devo bhava ||—*Taitt. Up.*, I. 11.

5. *Br. Up.*, V. ii. 3.

its very nature, such a perfection is possible for all. Evil no doubt is, but it ought not to be, because the *ātman* is essentially good and, when the *ātman* is realised, evil becomes sterile and self-destructive. He who realises the *ātman* sees good in all persons and God in all beings. Every *jīva* is essentially good; goodness is the chief quality of God and He is immanent in all *jīvas* and makes them in His own image. Goodness is perfected in godliness. Every *jīva* is good and godly. The godly man loves all beings because they are all *jīvas* like him and because the same *ātman* abides in them as their All-Self.

The ethics of the *Upaniṣads* is thus an enquiry into the nature of the morally good and the supreme good and thus has its culmination in religion. The supreme good or *puruṣārtha* is the realisation of Brahman by renouncing the values of economic, political and hedonistic life (*artha* and *kāma*) which are only extrinsic and transient. Even the practice of *dharma* as an imperative of duty is an endeavour without any end and affords no satisfaction. Brahman is ever perfect in itself, and the *jīva*, now *avidyā*-ridden and imperfect, seeks the perfection of Brahman. It is a progression in moral goodness and rightness till the aspiration is crowned with achievement. Ethical religion presupposes the distinction between the supreme good which is the self-accomplished Brahman and the ethical good which implies the effort on the part of the *jīva* to attain that end. The means by which the end is realised is called the *sādhana* or ceaseless moral and spiritual effort to attain Brahman. The end can be attained because Brahman is itself the endeavour and the end, the *sādhana* and the *sādhya*, the moral good and the supreme good. The study of the *sādhana*s is the theme of the next chapter.

## VI. UPANIṢADIC CULTURE OR SĀDHANAS

The *mumukṣu* has to practise certain *sādhana*s or means to *mukti* and the attainment of Brahman, but there are sharp differences of opinion amongst *Vedāntins* in defining their exact nature. All *Vedāntins* begin with a criticism of the *Mīmāṃsakas*. They insist on the primacy of the moral law of *dharma* or duty. The *Veda* extols *karma*, and knowledge is only an auxiliary to action, and even our normal mental life is sensory-motor or ideomotor. Consciousness is essentially conative and even in contemplation there is incessant thought activity or inner tension. The *Upaniṣad* furnishes a classical example, namely, King Janaka, a *Brahmajñānī* who preferred the active life to the ascetic ideal of inaction or cessation of all activity. The *Advaitin* combats this view by tracing *karma* to *avidyā*, which can be dispelled only by *jñāna*. *Karma* and *jñāna* are opposed to each other like darkness and light. *Jñāna* as enlightenment dispels *ajñāna* which seems to obscure it and in this way truth is affirmed and falsity is rejected. The sublation of illusion is immediate and not mediate. The *Dhyānaniyogavādin* controverts the *Advaitic* view that Brahman is immediately apprehended and contends that *mukti* is progressively attained by seeking truth, reflecting on its nature and finally realising it. The *Niṣprapañcīkaraṇa-niyogavādin* goes a step further and explains *mukti* acosmically as the apprehension of Brahman by the destruction of the world show. The *Bhedābheda*vādin arrests this monistic tendency, insists on the equal

validity and value of *jñāna* and *karma* and utilises the highest values of moral and philosophic life in the meditational process. *Jñāna* is the ceaseless reflection on the *abheda* aspect of Brahman and *karma* is spiritualised as the worship of God or *Brahmārpaṇa*. *Jñāna* provides the rationale for *karma* and *karma* is the dynamic side of philosophic insight. *Jñāna-karma* is the static and dynamic side of the same philosophic quest. This view is free from the defects of *Vedic* ritualism and the illusionism of *Māyāvāda*, but its fatal error is the attribution of imperfection to the infinite. *Viśiṣṭādvaita* rejects ritualism, illusionism and the self-contradictions of *Bhedābheda* and formulates a scheme which starts with *Karma Yoga* and *Jñāna Yoga* and ends with *Bhakti Yoga* and *Prapatti*. In this way, each *Vedāntic* philosopher has his own scheme of means (*sādhana*s) and it is therefore necessary to examine the relative merits of each and determine its function and nature as methods of *Vedāntic* culture.

The rationale of the *sādhana*s is furnished by the *Upaniṣadic* view of the *upāsana*s. *Brahmopāsana* is meditation on the nature of Brahman and is the means to the attainment of *mukti*. He who knows Brahman becomes Brahman<sup>1</sup> and he attains the supreme end of life.<sup>2</sup> The *Upaniṣads* enjoin on the *mumukṣu* the practice of the thirty-two *vidyās* and though they may differ in form and procedure the goal is the same, namely, intuition of Brahman; option is given to the aspirant to choose any one of the *vidyās*. From the list of the important

1. brahma veda brahmaiva bhavati—*Mund. Up.*, III. ii. 9.

2. brahmavid āpnoti param.—*Taitt. Up.*, II. i. 1

*vidyās* given below, it will be seen that the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* mentions the largest number and variety and the other *vidyās* are described in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, *Kaṭha*, *Taittirīya*, *Īśāvāsya* and *Kauṣṭhikī Upaniṣads*.

Sadvidyā	Chāndogya Upaniṣad	VI.
Antarādityavidyā	"	I. vi. 6.
Ākāśavidyā	"	I. ix. 1.
Prāṇavidyā	"	I. xi. 5.
Paramjyotividyā	"	III. xiii. 7.
Śāṇḍilyavidyā	"	III. xiv. 1.
Upakosalavidyā	"	IV. x.
Vaiśvānaravidyā	"	V. xi.
Bhūmavidyā	"	VII.
Satyakāmavidyā	"	IV. iv.
Daharavidyā	"	VIII.
Madhuvidyā	"	III. i.
Samvargavidyā	"	IV. iii.
Gāyatrīvidyā	"	III. xii.
Pañcāgnividyā	"	V. iii to x.
Akṣividyā	"	IV. xv. 1.
Antaryāmividyā	Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad	III. vii.
Akṣaravidyā	"	III. viii. 8.
Jyotiṣāmjyotirvidyā	"	IV. iv. 16.
Maitreyīvidyā	"	II. iv.
Sarvāntarātmavidyā	"	III. iv.
Ānandamayavidyā	Taittirīyopaniṣad	Ānandavalli
Vārunividyā	"	Bhṛguvalli
Nyāsavidyā	"	Nārāyaṇam 49--52
Paramapuruṣavidyā	Kaṭhopaniṣad	I. iii.
Naciketavidyā	"	I. ii.
Āṅguṣṭhapramitavidyā	"	II. iv. 12.



Paryāṅkavidyā	Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad I.
Pratardanavidyā	" III.
Bālākividya	" IV.
Akṣaraparavidyā	Muṇḍakopaniṣad I.
Īśāvāsyavidyā	Īśāvāsyopaniṣad 3

All these meditations on Brahman insist on moral and spiritual discipline and initiation by a *guru* or *Brahmajñānī* as the essential conditions for realising Brahman. By the practice of self-renouncement (*vairāgya*) and introversion<sup>4</sup> (*āvṛtta cakṣus*) the *mumukṣu* is led step by step by the *guru*<sup>5</sup> till he regains his home in the Absolute.

Śaṅkara, in his exposition of these *vidyās*, divides them into two classes: (1) the worship of a personal God or *saguṇa upāśana* and (2) the intuition of the Absolute by *nirguṇa upāśana*. Brahman is the *sat* without a second and is impersonal and indeterminate, transcending the limits of logical thinking; but, owing to *avidyā*, Brahman is conceived, in the interests of devout meditation, as if it has name and form. What is limitless and impersonal is personified as *Īśvara* by the religious consciousness and invested with a spatial and temporal character. But, really speaking, *Īśvara* is only a conceptual reading of the Absolute and is conjoined with cosmic nescience if not controlled by it. It is only by the consciousness of identity that the *jīva* realises that he is *Īśvara*,

3. Reference may be made to A. Govindāchār Swāmi's translation of the *Bhagavad Gītā* and Nārāyaṇaswāmi Aiyar's *Thirty-two Vidyās*.

4. *Kaṭh. Up.*, II. iv. 1.

5. *Ch. Up.*, VI. viii. 7.

ignorance is dispelled and Brahman shines without a second. The *mumukṣu* who has *Advaitavāsanā* or follows the monistic tradition should satisfy the four requisites or *sādhana catuṣṭaya*, before he seeks Brahman. These are described by Śaṅkara in his introduction to the *Sūtra Bhāṣya*. The first is the discrimination between Brahman that is real and the world that is false or illusory (*nityānitya vastu viveka*). The second follows from the first and is the renunciation of the pleasures of empirical life or illusory existence both here and in *svarga* and the feeling of detachment (*ihāmutra karma-phala bhoga virāga*). The third is the discipline of the will which comprises the six kinds of *śama* or mind-control, *dama* or sense-control, *uparati* or steady self-renouncement and equanimity, *titikṣā* or indifference to the pairs of opposites, *samādhāna* arising from focussing the will on Brahman and *śraddhā* or faith in *Śāstra* and the *guru*. As the result of this triple discipline of thought, feeling and will or *viveka*, *vairāgya* and the *śama* series arises *mumukṣutva* or the desire for *Brahmajñāna* induced and impelled by the idea of escaping from the scorching fire of *samsāra*. This desire later deepens into a yearning for *mukti* like the panting for breath of a drowning man. It may be awakened by the first three disciplines or result in them. With the mind purified by *karma*, exalted by the worship of *saguṇa* Brahman and equipped with the four *sādhana*s, the *mumukṣu* seeks the aid of the *guru* who has intuited Brahman and he is initiated into the essentials of *Advaitajñāna* and enabled to realise Truth.

The *Upaniṣadic* imperatives prescribing the stages in self-realisation, such as "Hear the truth of the *ātman*, reflect and meditate on it" (*śrotavyaḥ, mantavyaḥ* and

*nīdīdhyāsītavyaḥ*)<sup>6</sup> are explained by the *Advaitin* in this way. In the first stage, the *mumukṣu* learns the meaning of the *mahāvākya*, “*tat tvam asi*” (‘Thou art that’)<sup>7</sup> In the light of the sixfold *Mīmāṃsaka* principles of interpretation, the beginning and the end of the *Upaniṣad* (*upakrama* and *upasamhāra*) convey the same idea of the identity of Brahman and *ātman*. It is explained by the nine illustrative instances (*abhyāsa*) and shown to be a new transcendental truth (*apūrvata*) which results in freedom from the dualistic outlook of *samsāra* (*phala*). It is preferred to *bhedajñāna* and extolled as the only *ñāna* and rationally justified (*arthavāda* and *upapatti*). In the second stage of *manana*, faith is strengthened by argumentation and reflection on the truth conveyed by the *Śruti*. *Anumāna* establishes the thesis that *ātman* and Brahman are identical by the discovery of the *hetu* that both are *sat cit ānanda*. *Upamāna* confirms it by the comparison of *kūṭastha* and *Īśvara* with the ether in the pot and ether itself (*ghaṭākāśa* and *mahākāśa*). *Anupalabdhi* points to the truth of the reality of the non-dual consciousness as experienced by every one in the sleep state. But even logical thinking or *tarkadr̥ṣṭi* is different from *tattvadr̥ṣṭi* or intuitive realisation and the next stage *nīdīdhyāsa* is a transition from reason to intuition and it consists in the practice of *savikalpa samādhi* by the thought of Brahman as the partless whole or infinite (*akhaṇḍākāra vṛtti*). While *śravaṇa* results in self-analysis and *manana* is the destruction of *vāsanās*, *nīdīdhyāsa* leads to the cessation of the activity of *citta* itself. Thus the thought on the truth, “Thou art that” gradually ripens into the spiritual experience of *Brahma-*

6. Br. Up., II. iv. 5.

7. Ch. Up., VI. viii. 7.

*jñāna*. While *śravaṇa* and *manana* dispel the doubts relating to the *pramāṇa* and the *prameya*, *nididhyāsa* removes the false feeling (*viparīta bhāvanā*) that the body is Brahman. In this way the seeker after Brahman ascends the paths of *karma*, *upāsana* and *jñāna* as expounded in the *Karma Kāṇḍa*, the *Upāsana Kāṇḍa* and the *Jñāna Kāṇḍa* of the *Vedas* and develops his moral, devotional and metaphysical ideals.

From the metaphysical standpoint of pure *Advaita*, there is really no progression involving the stages of *Karma Yoga*, *Upāsana* and *Jñāna*, as *mukti* is not the attainment of a goal, but is the intuition of the Absolute as *nirguṇa* Brahman. *Ajñāna* clouds the ever-shining Brahman (*svayam jyotis*) and multiplies itself into numberless forms and *jñāna* is disillusionment; and though it is immediate it appears to be an unveiling process admitting of stages of stultification. *Avidyā* claims to be real and is then proved to be self-contradictory and is finally rejected as illustrated in the case of the rope-snake illusion. To explain it in another way, the metaphysical transition from external relations to internal relations exposes the self-contradictions of relational thought itself and points to the truth of the identity consciousness. This is a reversal of the Hegelian method of thesis, antithesis and synthesis, since it envisages an ascent from the stage of *samsāra* becoming or synthesising, to that of antithesis or the knowledge of the opposition between being or *ātmā* and non-being or *anātmā* and finally to the state of thesis in which the *ātman* returns to itself as pure consciousness. Repose comes after posing and opposing. From another point of view, the metaphysical development consists of three stages. In the first stage, the world is felt to be a fleeting flux and

evanescent like the ripples in a river. In the second it is known to be self-contradictory like the rope-snake riddle and in the last stage it is rejected as *tucca* i.e., false like the hypothetical sky-flower, *khaga puṣpa*. The true meaning of the three levels of *niṣkāma karma*, *upāsanā* and *jñāna* is now recognised as stages in the process of the self-stultification of *ajñāna*. The first removes *mala doṣa* or the soilure of *avidyā*, the second eliminates *vikṣepa doṣa* or the confusions of the divisive consciousness and the third is the last step of the process and it consists in the disappearance of the veil or *āvaraṇa doṣa*. Thus, when the false is known to be fleeting or self-contradictory, the true is realised as the eternally self-existent in the light of the familiar Advaitic principle of *apaccheda*. *Jagat* or the universe is empirical or phenomenal or false and Brahman is transcendental and absolute and is true.

The *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* extols the meditation on *aum* as the highest mode of *nirguṇa upāsana* higher than *jñāna* or reflection on the object, and *dhyāna* or inner introversion. *Jīva* and *Īśvara* co-exist as *praṇava* in the four states of waking, dream, sleep and *turīya*. In the first stage as symbolised by the first *mātra* or letter, *jīva* is called *viśva* and *Īśvara*, *virāt*; in the second, *jīva* is *taijasa* and *Īśvara* is *Hiraṇyagarbha* and this is symbolised by the second letter; in the third the *jīva* is *prājñā* and the lord is *Īśvara* and is represented by the third letter and in the fourth and final stage of *turīya* pure consciousness exists as *jīva sākṣin* and *Īśvara sākṣin*. The analysis of the three states of consciousness results in the sublation of the waking consciousness by the dream state, the sublation of the dream state in

dreamless sleep and the return of consciousness to itself in *turiya* which is *praṇava* itself.

Idealism carried to its logical conclusion as the theory of the single *jīva* denies the existence of the external world even as a phenomenal reality or *vyāvahārika satya*, reduces it to a mere mental construction or *kalpanāmātra* or projection of *avidyā*, and denies the plurality of *jīvas*. The whole universe of space-time is mind-made and mind-sustained and is dissolved in 'my' mind.<sup>8</sup> What is perceived is only a mere mental creation like a dream, and the true *sādhana* lies in analysing all *vṛttis* and *vāsanās*. *Jñāna* is not attained by seeking the grace of God, but is the effulgence of pure consciousness in which the 'That,' the cosmic self, is dissolved into the 'I' consciousness.

The *Dvaitavāda* of Pūrṇaprajña, which is called pluralistic realism, goes to the other extreme and repudiates the identity philosophy as an apostasy or heresy. The root idea of *Dvaita* philosophy is the absolute difference between Brahman and the *jīva*. While Brahman is self-dependent, the *jīva* is entirely dependent on Brahman and there is absolute distinction between the omnipotent creator and the impotent creature. The *Chāndogya* text is not "Thou art that", as the *Advaitin* wrongly construes it, but it is really "Thou art not that" and this is proved by the nine illustrative instances used in the *Upaniṣad* like the blindfolded person trying to return to the city of Gāndhāra.<sup>9</sup> This conclusion it seeks to establish by the

8. mayyeva sakalam jātam mayi sarvaṁ pratisthitam | mayi sarvaṁ layam yāti—*Kaival. Up.*, I 19

9 *Ch. Up.*, VI xiv. 1.

six *Mīmāṃsaka* rules of exposition as the beginning and end of the whole topic refer to the radical difference between *ādeśa* the creator, and *Śvetaketu* the creature, and confirm the conclusion by the tests of *abhyāsa*, *apūrvata*, *phala*, *arthavāda* and *upapatti*. The same idea is illustrated by the analogy of the two birds on the same tree. *Śvetaketu* gives up his conceit or *ahaṅkāra* and realises that the relation between the *jīva* and *Īśvara* is expressed in the sentence 'dāsoham' and not 'soham', 'I am the servant of God and not God.' *Dvaita* insists on the need for moral and spiritual discipline which consists in the practice of *niškāma karma* and *bhakti*. Devotion arises from *śāstrābhyaśa* or the metaphysical knowledge of the supremacy of God and the dependence of the *jīva* on His grace and the steady and strenuous practice of spirituality realised as service to the supreme Lord.

*Viśiṣṭādvaita* avoids the pitfalls of ceremonialism, pan-illusionism and pantheism of the *Bhedābheda* schools by affirming the reality of experience in all its levels, assigning relative values to the different kingdoms regarding experience and giving the highest value to the religious experience of Brahman. The *Vedas* and the *Upaniṣads* are integrally related as one *śāstra* and they are complementary and not self-contradictory. There is a real progression, ethical as well as religious, in the apprehension and attainment of Brahman. *Viśiṣṭādvaita* provides a systematic account of the *sādhana*s consisting of moral, spiritual and religious disciplines or *Karma Yoga*, *Jñāna Yoga* and *Bhakti Yoga*, by which the *mumukṣu* becomes a *bhakta* thirsting for divine communion. The self has its being in God and belongs to Him, but somehow, owing to its ancient propensity to

*avidyā-karma*, it identifies itself with the body and, ensnared by the lusts of the flesh, it subjects itself to the infinite hazards and hardships of *samsāra*. But when the *jīva* becomes a *mumukṣu* he retraces his steps and seeks his home in God. The first step in the ascent to the Absolute is the practice of *niṣkāma karma* or the performance of disinterested duty emptied of all subjective inclinations and objective ideas of utility. The next stage is *Jñāna Yoga* or the method of introversion by which the *ātman* is distinguished from the twenty-four categories of *prakṛti* and realised as an eternal spiritual entity. But self-realisation is only a stepping stone and not a stopping place as it suffers from the ego-centric fallacy and therefore there is a transition from self-centredness to God-consciousness, and from *Jñāna Yoga* to *Bhakti Yoga* or *Brahmopāsanā*.

There are seven requisites of this *upāsanā* described in the *Laghu Siddhānta* of the *Śrī Bhāṣya* on I. i. 1 and known as *sādhana saptaka*. They consist of *viveka*, *vimoka*, *abhyāsa*, *kriyā*, *kalyāṇa*, *anavasāda* and *anuddharśa*. *Viveka* is the purification by *sattvic* food of the mind-body which is a living temple of God or *Brahmapuri*. *Vimoka* is freedom from sensuality and the cultivation of detachment. *Abhyāsa* is the practice of the presence of God as the Inner Self. *Kriyā* is the performance of one's duties to all beings in the universe. *Kalyāṇa* consists in the cultivation of the virtues of *satya* or truth, *ārjava* or uprightness, *ahimsā* or non-violence, *dayā* or compassion and *dāna* or benevolence. *Anavasāda* and *anuddharśa* consist in avoiding the extremes of dejection and exultation and maintaining the golden mean. The chief aim of these *sādhana*s is the harmonious development of thought, feeling and will as



essential stages in the building up of *bhakti*. *Yoga* consists of eight stages and it aims at the control of the mind made restless by *rājasic* distractions. The practice of *yoga* presupposes the twin requisites of self-renouncement (*vairāgya*) and introversion or retirement into the cell of spiritual knowledge. *Yama* consists in the practice of the five virtues known as *aparigraha* (non-possession), *asteya* (non-stealing), *satya* (truthfulness), *brahmacarya* (continence) and *ahimsā* (non-violence). *Niyama* includes reflection on the import of the *Upaniṣads*, *śama* (self-purification), *santoṣa* (contentment) and *tapas* (austerity). *Prāṇāyāma* is breath-control resulting in psychic control. *Pratyāhāra* is the method of turning the mind inward and thus arresting the externalising tendency. *Dhāraṇa* is fixing the mind in the self by thinking away the distractions of *citta*. *Samādhi* is the consummation of moral and spiritual endeavour and the realisation of the *śānti* or peace that passeth all understanding.

Equipped with these disciplines, the *mumukṣu* becomes an *upāsaka* who meditates on Brahman in any of the thirty-two ways prescribed in the *Upaniṣads*. To apprehend Brahman is to comprehend His nature and His essential qualities and meditation on one quality includes that on the other qualities as well. The *vidyās* deal with the metaphysical perfections of Brahman like truth, purity and infinity. The *Sadvidyā* describes Brahman as the real reality and the true of the true. The *Antaryā-mividyā* further defines the *sat* as the inner self of all beings and the ultimate subject of all experience. The *Akṣaravidyā* refers to the imperishable Absolute which is different from *cit-acit*. The *Daharavidyā* expounds the nature of the infinite becoming infinitesimally small and

dwelling in the heart of all beings without being affected by their imperfections, to satisfy the devotional needs of the aspirant. The *Bhūmaavidyā* and the *Ānandamaya-vidyā* stress the blissful nature of Brahman. The *Paryāṅkavidyā* points to the blissful world of Brahman yonder that transcends the passing shows of *prakṛti* and the perishing values of *karma*. What is known as the worship of *iṣṭa devatā* or chosen deity is really the worship of the Inner Ruler Immortal that is the source and centre of all the *devas*. The aesthetic side is brought out in the worship of Brahman with a shining beauteous form of His own. In the *Gāyatrīvidyā* or *Praṇavavidyā*, the *upāsaka* fixes his mind on the *praṇava mantra* which means Brahman itself. In the *Nyāsavidyā*, the aspirant surrenders his self to Brahman. In the *Vaiśvānaravidyā*, the threefold world is treated as the body (expression) of the Self. Wherever there is reference to the physical world like *ākāśa* or *jyotiḥ*, it connotes Brahman the Highest Self that pervades all things. Likewise terms denoting the *devas* like Indra and Sūrya really connote Brahman the indwelling Self. The meditation rejects the animistic and anthropomorphic interpretation of Vedic worship and reveals the all-comprehensive interpretation of worship and catholicity of the Upaniṣadic religion. The immanence of Brahman in all beings also implies His ethical eminence and the two are connected by the idea of Brahman as the supremely beautiful. This triple truth frees the Vedāntic ideal of worship from the defects of illusionism, pantheism and deism. By reflecting on the scriptural injunction 'Know the *ātman*,' knowledge deepens into conviction and vedana ripens into *upāsana* or *bhakti*. *Upāsana* is the ceaseless practice of the presence of God till the

concept of God as the recollection of a prenatal divine life acquires the intensity of directly contacting Him. Representation becomes as vivid as a direct realisation. *Bhakti* is love for love's sake, and is absolute, unconditional and reciprocal, and knows no bargaining nor fear. Even *mukti* or liberation from the bonds of *karma* has no attraction for the *bhakta* if it is emptied of love. Love ripens into a longing for God and the *mumukṣu* as devotee yearns for his home in the Absolute and the bliss of divine communion.

The supreme *sādhana* for attaining *mukti* is the *Viśiṣṭādvaitic* theory of *bhaktirūpāpanna jñāna* which is a harmonious blend of *jñāna* and *bhakti* and it avoids the evils of mere intellectualism and emotionalism. *Jñāna* illumines *bhakti* and *bhakti* imparts moving or dynamic power to *jñāna*, and the two together constitute the nature of *mumukṣutva*. According to the *jñāna* aspect, the text "Thou art that" refers not to identity or difference or identity in difference but to the inseparable unity and union between Brahman and the *jīva* or *viśiṣṭaikya*. The cosmic self is also the inner self of the *jīva*. Brahman is the *śarīrī* of the *jīva* or the self of the self as taught in the *Upaniṣad* 'I am thou, holy divinity and thou art I.' The ṛṣi Vāmadeva realised the same truth in the cosmic form when he said 'I am Manu, I am Sūrya'.<sup>10</sup> This philosophic idea of unity between Brahman and the *jīva* or *avibhāga* deepens into the mystic quest for union or *sāyujya*: the *Gītā*, as the quintessence of the *Upaniṣads*, affirms that the *jñānī* who with his hunger for the Absolute seeks Vāsudeva in all beings is a *mahātmā* and

10. *Br. Up.*, I. iv. 10.

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is the very self of God Himself. The God-hungry great soul is as nothing when compared to the hunger of God and, when the yearning becomes insatiable, the two become one and the *jīva* is free from the fetters of *samsāra* and attains *mukti* or unitiveness and this topic is the theme of the next chapter.

## VII. MUKTI

The various *Vedāntic* interpretations of the nature of *mukti* may be briefly considered before arriving at its exact meaning and value. To the *Cārvāka* who denies the existence of the *ātman* after death, the question does not arise ; for, to him, *mukti* is only the dissolution of the body. When the body functions, consciousness also functions ; when the body does not function consciousness does not function. The Buddhist goes a step further. He contends that the self is only a fleeting psycho-physical series without any substantiality and that *mukti* or *nirvāṇa* is the cessation of the ceaseless flux and the extinction of the aching thirst for life. The negative logic of this view leads to the abyss of nothingness. The Jaina claims to prove the existence of the *jīva*, and he explains *mukti* as release from embodiedness and the soilure of *karma* and as progression to perfection. But endless progression is meaningless and futile. Among the *āstika* philosophers and theistic thinkers, who accept *Vedic* authority, there are also divergent views, which are often contradictory and confusing. To the *Sāṅkhya*, *mukti* is a state of *kaivalya* or aloneness, in which the *puruṣa* freed from the fancied entanglement in *prakṛti* regains its self-identity as a formless, featureless state of consciousness and remains for ever as a silent spectator seeing nothing and doing nothing. The *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* systems define *mukti* as the absence of sorrow without any positive content or meaning ; in that state, the *jīva* remains like a nonsentient or inert thing without any intelligence. When consciousness is abolished, the self

becomes still and statuesque. In the *Mīmāṃsaka* scheme, the performance of duty takes the place of devotion to the deity and the reward of duty is mainly the hedonistic enjoyment of the pleasures of *svarga*. The moral 'ought' or endeavour is preferred to the attainment of the religious end. It is *Vedānta* alone that, relying on *Upaniṣadic* authority, expounds the true meaning of *mukti* when it affirms that Brahman, the *source* of all existence, is also the supreme *goal* of all experience. The supreme end of *Vedāntic* enquiry is the realisation of Brahman as the Self of all beings and the consequent freedom from the triple ills of *samsāra* arising from *avidyā*, *kāma* and *karma*.

The supreme end of all the *sādhana*s is the realisation of Brahman and the attainment of *mukti* or freedom from bondage. The *Upaniṣads* repeatedly declare this truth in various ways. "He who knows Brahman reaches the Highest",<sup>1</sup> "He knows Brahman, becomes Brahman",<sup>2</sup> "Having known Him only, he passes beyond death".<sup>3</sup> "When all desires which once dwelt in his heart are removed, then the mortal becomes immortal, then he attains Brahman".<sup>4</sup> "Thus does that serene being, having risen from the body and having approached the highest self, manifest itself in its true form".<sup>5</sup> "When the seer sees the shining maker and Lord, the person

1. brahma vid āpnoti param.—*Taitt. Up.*, II. i. 1.

2. brahma veda brahmaiva bhavati.—*Mund. Up.*, III. ii. 9.

3. tam eva viditvā atimṛtyum eti.—*Śv. Up.*, VI. 15.

4. yadā sarve pramucyante kāmā yesyāhrdi śrītāḥ | atha martyomṛto bhavatyatra brahma samaśnute.—*Br. Up.*, IV. iv. 7.

5. evam evaisa samprasādosmāccarirāt samutthāya paramjyotir-upasampadya svena rupeṇābhiniṣpadyate.—*Ch. Up.*, VIII. xii. 3.

who has his source in Brahman, then he is wise and shaking off good and evil, free from all passions, he reaches the highest".<sup>6</sup> "The bondage of the heart is broken, all doubts are solved, all his *karma* perishes when he has beheld the Highest".<sup>7</sup>

*Mukti* is not merely the direct apprehension of Brahman, but also the attainment of *Brahmaloka*, and the ascent to the world yonder is described in glowing but symbolic terms. When the body is dissolved at death, the *mukta* or the released self with its homing instinct withdraws itself from its psycho-physical functions and the world of sense and sensibility. The *indriyas* enter into *manas* and *manas* into *prāṇa* and then the *prāṇa* together with the essence of the five elements is absorbed in the *jīva*.<sup>8</sup> A sudden flash of light coming from the indwelling self or *hārda* reveals the path to perfection or *arcirādi* and the *mukta* enters the *Brahmarandhra* or gateway to God. While the *avidvān* or ignorant man follows the dark and dreary path of *dhūmamārga* and suffers from the hardships of *avidyā-karma*, the *vidvān* exalted by the idea of going back to his home in the Absolute enters the straight and shining path or *deva-pathaḥ* that leads to *Brahmaloka*, and passes victoriously through the shining spheres of Agni, Vāyu, Varuṇa, Indra and Prajāpati before he enters the world of eternal

6 yadā paśyah paśyate rukmavarnam kartāram īśam puruṣam brahmayonim |

tadā vidvān punyapāpe vidhūya niranjanah paramam sām-  
yam upaiti.—*Mund. Up.*, III i. 3.

7. bhidyate hrdayagranthiśchidyante sarva saṁśayaḥ || kṣi-  
yante cāśya karmāni tasmindrste parāvare ||—*Mund. Up.*, II. ii. 8.

8. varīmanasi sampadyate manah prāṇe prāṇastejasi tejah para-  
syām devatāyām—*Ch. Up.*, VI xv. 2

bliss. The chief function of these cosmic deities consists in greeting and glorifying the *mukta* in his heavenward progress. Then a trans-human person who is really the ambassador of the Absolute leads him to Brahman and the *mukta* no longer returns to the world of *samsāra*.<sup>9</sup> The world of Brahman is beyond the world of space-time-cause and the *mukta* who attains it has a direct knowledge of Brahman and enjoys the eternal bliss of divine communion.

To the *Advaitic* philosopher, *mukti* is freedom in embodiment here and now, and not freedom from embodiment to be enjoyed in a world yonder. It is *Brahmajñāna* or *jñāna* that is Brahman which arises from the negation of nescience in the state of *nirvāṇa*. There can therefore be no question of ascent to or attainment of Brahman. The *Upaniṣadic* passages above cited dealing with eschatology, however, explicitly describe the ascent of the *mukta* and wind up by stating that, after he is led to Brahman by the trans-human person, he stays there for ever and never returns. To reconcile this with *Advaita*, Śaṅkara, following Bādari, assumes that these and all other *Upaniṣadic* passages referring to ascent must, from the nature of the case, refer not to the Absolute or *nirguṇa* Brahman, but to effected (*kārya*) or lower Brahman. Support is sought for this view from the wording of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* passage about worlds

9. tat puruṣo amānavah | sa enān brahma gamayatyeṣa deva-patho brahmapatha etena pratipadyamānā imam mānavam āvartam nāvartante.—*Ch. Up.*, IV. xv. 6.

tān vaidyutāt puruṣo mānaṣa etya brahmalokān gamayati | teṣu brahmalokesu parāḥ parāvato vasanti tesam na punarāvṛttiḥ.—*Br. Up.*, VI. ii. 15.



of Brahman and residence there. "For it would be impossible to qualify the highest Brahman by means of the plural number ('worlds'); while the plural number may be applied to the lower Brahman which may abide in different conditions. The term 'world' can also directly denote only some place of enjoyment".<sup>10</sup> But the passages quoted above declare that "those who have set out on that path do not return to the life of man" and "for them there is no return here" and this truth cannot apply to any merely effected or lower Brahman.

To answer this difficulty Śaṅkara, following Bādari, states: "When the reabsorption of the effected Brahman world draws near, the souls in which meanwhile perfect knowledge has sprung up proceed, together with Hiranyagarbha the ruler of that world, to 'what is higher than that,' i.e., to the pure highest place of Viṣṇu. This is the release by successive steps which we have to accept on the basis of the scriptural declarations about the non-return of the souls".<sup>11</sup> The *arcirādigati* therefore leads, according to Śaṅkara, to the world of Brahmā otherwise known as Hiranyagarbha and the souls reach perfect knowledge there and eventually are released from *samsāra* along with Brahmā. The *Upaniṣadic* passages on the face of them do not contemplate such an exalted position for Hiranyagarbha at the top of the *arcirādi mārga* and Śaṅkara is only forced to accept such a solution as

10. *Śaṅkara Bhāṣya*, IV. iii. 8—Thibaut's translation, Part II, p. 390.

11. *Śaṅkara Bhāṣya*, IV. iii. 10—Thibaut's translation, Part II, p. 391.

he cannot escape in any other way from the plain statement of the *Śruti* that the *arcirādi mārga* leads to Brahman from which there is no return.

Even so there is the fundamental grammatical difficulty that whereas Brahman in the neuter signifies the supreme Brahman, the name of Hiranyagarbha is Brahmā in the masculine gender. The use of the neuter gender in the *Upaniṣad* clearly indicates the supreme Brahman and not Brahmā the four-faced creator. Śaṅkara accepts this but states that though Brahman strictly signifies only the supreme *nirguṇa* Brahman, it may also signify, by proximity, the lower Brahman which is after all only the higher Brahman described for purposes of pious meditation as possessing certain effected qualities. Śaṅkara does not definitely identify the *kārya* Brahman of Bādari either with *saguṇa* Brahman as stated here or with Hiranyagarbha as implied in the previous argument nor does he hold that *saguṇa* Brahman and Hiranyagarbha are one. He is compelled by the *Śruti* to accept full *mukti* to these souls and therefore with the aid of the *Smṛti* promising eventual release to Brahmā and his co-residents he is prepared to identify Brahman in these passages with Hiranyagarbha. As regards the use of the neuter gender, however, Śaṅkara apparently feels that to interpret Brahman in the neuter gender as referring to Hiranyagarbha even by proximity would be somewhat of a violence to language and grammar, and so in meeting this objection he prefers the milder expression of "Brahman possessing certain effected qualities". Other interpreters, however, following the natural order of the *Sūtras* treat Bādari's theory as a *prima facie* view refuted later and so they have no hesitation in describing the *kārya* Brahman of Bādari as Brahmā the four faced.

The *Sūtrakāra*, after giving Bādari's view as described above, proceeds to detail Jaimini's view that the former is untenable as the term Brahman should be given its direct meaning of the supreme Brahman. There are also several passages in the *Upaniṣads* declaring that immortality is reached by going, e.g., "going upwards by that, he reaches immortality,"<sup>12</sup> and this *Kāthopaniṣad* passage clearly refers from the context to the highest Brahman only. The passage in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* "I enter the hall of Prajāpati, the house"<sup>13</sup> cannot have the lower Brahman for its object. For the immediately preceding passage shows that the highest Brahman, different in nature from the effected one, is the general subject matter. The text from the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* VIII. xii. 3 about "the serene being having arisen from the body and having approached the highest self manifests itself in its true form" confirms the same truth. As regards the expression "worlds of Brahman", the 'of' is appositional and there is no opposition between Brahman and the worlds as Brahman is spoken of as "this Brahma world"<sup>14</sup> in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*.

From the philosophic point of view as different from the textual, the *Advaitin* holds that while *krāmamukti* is gradual ascent to the Absolute, *jīvanmukti* is immediate, involving no change or progress. Progress in or of the Absolute is self-contradictory and illusory. The moral ideas of progress betray the self-discrepancy between progress and attainment and the religious view

12. tayordhvam āyannamrtatvameti.—*Kath. Up.*, II. vi. 16.

13. prajāpatessabhām veśma prapadye.—*Ch. Up.*, VIII. xiv. 1.

14. esa brahma lokaḥ.—*Br. Up.*, IV. iii. 32; IV. iv. 23.

of perfection in a far off world involves the self-contradiction between Being and Becoming and also the dualistic distinction between the finite self that seeks God and the infinite that is sought by the finite. This self-discrepancy is ultimately traceable to *avidyā*. *Mukti* is immediate disillusionment or freedom from *avidyā* in which there is no distinction between the apprehension of Brahman and its attainment. In that state, even the *Veda* or scriptural knowledge, being relational and mediate, is transcended or sublated. To the ordinary or empirically minded man with his anthropomorphic tendencies, the world of space-time and its creator *Īśvara* are real and he attains *mukti* in a far off divine world along with *Brahmā* the first born of cosmic nescience. There are, however, differences in the Advaitic exposition of *mukti* varying with the four main types of *Advaita* already described. To the extreme *Advaitin* in excelsis, *mukti* is *jñāna* that is Brahman which is ever extistent and *avidyā* with the world based upon it is non-existent like the square circle. The illusionist describes *mukti* as disillusionment due to the dispelling of ignorance by sublating it. The phenomenon theory says that *avidyā* arises from dualistic thought and *mukti* is the integral intuition of Brahman. To the last school which is more *Brahmavāda* than *Māyāvāda*, *avidyā* is a real obscuring something and *Brahmajñāna* is a process of self-transcendence involving the stages of *upāsanā*, mediate knowledge or *parokṣajñāna* and immediate knowledge or *aparokṣajñāna*.

These arguments of the *Advaitin* are controverted by the non-*Advaitins* and shown to be fallacious and futile. The very term *jīvanmukti* is self-contradictory as embodiedness and emancipation cannot co-exist. The

extreme view that illusion is non-existent dissolves the whole problem of philosophy and therefore it can neither be explained nor criticised. The illusion theory admits of stages in sublation which is impossible, as *mukti* is immediate. If everything is an illusion, even *mukti* becomes a māke-believe. The phenomenon theory defines *mukti* as the abolition of the pluralistic consciousness or illusoriness and not of the pluralistic world itself and this view fits in with that of Bhāskara and Rāmānuja. The theory of *mukti* which accepts the reality of stages like mediate knowledge and immediate knowledge practically recognises the reality of the phenomenal world, but it does not clear the confusion arising from the dualism between phenomenal reality and transcendental reality. The charge that the theist suffers from anthropomorphism and has not risen to the level of *jñāna* has no point or force as no man can escape his own thought and even *jñāna* is as much a human quality as *karma* or *bhakti*. Therefore the distinction which Śaṅkara draws between the metaphysical view of *nirguṇa* Brahman and *nirvāṇa* and *saguṇa* Brahman and *kramamukti* has neither textual sanction nor philosophic justification. If *nirvāṇa* is identity consciousness, *mukti* or freedom has no meaning. But if it is an ascent not to the Absolute but to a finite God, it does not satisfy the religious consciousness. A true philosophy of religion abolishes the distinction and defines *mukti* as the apprehension as well as the attainment of Brahman.

*Mukti* cannot be attained by merely asking for it as it is won by spiritual *sādhana* and not by mere intellectual apprehension. Even the *Māyāvādin* tacitly recognises this truth when he admits the persistence of *prārabdhakarma* even after enlightenment. If *jñāna* and *karma* are

opposed to each other like light and darkness, then the effect of *karma* should be completely destroyed as soon as there is the awakening of *advaitajñāna*.

*Avidyā* must be existent, or non-existent or existent as well as non-existent. If it exists as an entity, it cannot be sublated; if it is non-existent, there is no meaning in seeking *mukti*. It cannot be both existent and non-existent as an indefinable something, as *jñāna* and *ajñāna* cannot co-exist. *Jñāna* cannot sublate *ajñāna* and sublate itself; *mukti* is either individual or collective; if it is considered to be the former, the view would lead to solipsism; if it is the latter, there should be *sarvamukti* in the strict sense but in the identity philosophy there is neither *sarva* nor *mukti*. *Advaita* as a philosophy is a work of thought and is therefore caught up in duality but if it is non-dual, it ceases to be a philosophy.

To Bhāskara, *mukti* is freedom from conditionateness and the attainment of the world of Brahman and it is not disillusionment here-now. The *Upaniṣads* repeatedly glorify the triumphant progress of the *mukta* from the pluralistic world of *samsāra* to the attainment of the unitive consciousness or *ekībhāva*. The pluralistic consciousness alone is abolished in *mukti* and not the pluralistic world. When consciousness is free from the real limiting adjuncts, it becomes infinite, eternal and blissful and is not emptied of content or character. Bhāskara avoids the two extremes of abstract monism and the pluralism based on difference and distinction. Like rivers that merge into the sea, the finite is merged into the Absolute. According to Yādavaprakāśa, the finite self is a real fact or factor of the infinite, existing in a *bhedābheda* relation, and is thus finite-infinite. But, owing to its identifi-

cation with the body, it suffers from the evils of divided consciousness, and submits itself to the miseries of metempsychosis. By transcending the limitations of finitude, the *jīva* enters into union with Brahman and attains His perfections and enjoys eternal bliss in the world yonder as a member of the Absolute. Nimbārka also accepts the ethics of *Bhedābheda* and defines *mukti* as the state of self-transcendence in the world of Brahman in which the particular remains without the defects of particularism owing to the identity that pervades the difference.

The Viśiṣṭādvaitic theory of *mukti* accepts the integrity of Upaniṣadic texts in all aspects, *bheda*, *abheda*, *bhedābheda*, *nirguṇa* and *aikya* texts, and defines it as the return of the self to its home in the Absolute. It reconciles the apparent self-contradictions between the transcendence and immanence of Brahman, and between the intrinsic value of the self and its modal dependence on Brahman. It defines emancipation as enlightenment as well as the attainment of *ānāṇḍaloka*. The world of space-time-cause (*deśa-kāla-nimitta*) and *puṇya-pāpa* (good and evil) is a three storeyed universe qualitatively based on *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* and is neither stable nor satisfactory. Freedom in the fullest sense of the term is physical, moral and spiritual and can be attained only when the *jīva* sheds its spurious individuality by transcending the finite and fractional world of space-time-cause and the claims and counter-claims of *karma* which is *puṇya-pāpa*. The *ātman* belongs to Brahman and it is *brahmanised*. The *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* portrays in the language of sense-symbolism the glory of the freed self when it enters the world of spaceless space, acquires the form and fragrance and flavour of Brahman (*Brahma-*

*rūpa*, *Brahmagandha* and *Brahmarasa*) which is *niravayava* and *nirguṇa*, and is immersed for ever in the fecunditive bliss of divine communion. In the unitive experience of bliss, there is the loss of self-feeling, but not of self-existence. The headquarters of Reality is not only a region of spaceless space and time under the form of eternity, but also a realm of ends and the home of the eternal values of truth, goodness and beauty. *Mukti* is freedom from embodiment and the attainment of infinite consciousness and eternal bliss. Not only are values conserved in the Absolute, but also personality in the supra-personal sense. The self regains its godliness, acquires the quality of God and effaces itself in the service of God. The self gains itself by making a free gift of itself to God and is thus transvalued. *Paramapada* is a noumenal realm which cannot be perceived or conceived, but is alogical, amoral and supra-personal. Matter shines there without any modification. Time exists under the form of eternity. It is not a block universe which is static and stirless, but is the eternal realised through the temporal. By plunging into this Ocean Pacific, the self is purified and perfected, and the *brahmavid* apprehends Brahman with the divine eye, comprehends His nature and sees Brahman in all beings and all beings in Brahman.

The charge is often levelled against the *Upaniṣadic* theory of *mukṭi* that it is absorption in the Absolute and provides no scope or hope for the perfection of the self as a person and for social and spiritual service to humanity. This criticism is due to bias and is not based on truth. The *Ṛṣis* of the *Upaniṣads* intuited Brahman as the Self of all beings and imparted their spirituality to others and made them *Ṛṣis*. *Ṛṣi*-making was the chief



vocation of the *Upaniṣadic* seers and if it were true that they sought selfish salvationism and self-extinction, the *Upaniṣads* would have long ago ceased to exist and be the solace of life and death for humanity. The *Gītā* which sums up *Upaniṣadic* wisdom extols activism and work for world-welfare and points to Janaka as the exemplar of *jñāna* and *karma*. Hindu culture was born in the expansive atmosphere of the *tapovanās* or the forest life of *sanyāsins* and *Ṛṣis* who specialised in Brahman the universal self and it bears a striking contrast to the exclusive cultures of the west which had their origin in the city States of Greece fighting for frontiers. *Ṛṣi*-hood or soul-making is the one increasing purpose of the *Upaniṣadic* or Hindu culture. The *mukta* seeks to be born again and again as a freed *jīva* working for the freedom of other *jīvas* and this view is a more inspiring ideal than the Buddhistic Bodhisatva who is universally kind to *jīvas*. But there is really no universal or *jīva* in the Buddhistic scheme of becoming without being. It is likewise a more exalting gospel than that of the advent of the Kingdom of God in which the faithful are elected and the infidels are eliminated. It is the immortal glory of the *Upaniṣads* that they proclaim for all ages the truths of the eternity of the *jīva*, the indwelling God in all *jīvas* and their consequent kinship and universal redemption and release. Unless humanity, especially of the aggressive west, imbibes these truths, there is no hope of peace or *sānti* on earth and the reign of divine love and grace.

## VIII. A SYNTHETIC VIEW OF THE UPANIṢADS

The analytic study of the *Upaniṣads* outlined in the foregoing chapters under the headings of epistemology, ontology, cosmology, psychology, ethics and religion is the elaboration of their central theme enshrined in the text, '*Brahmavid āpnoti param*' (he who knows Brahman attains the highest). Analysis and synthesis go together and are complementary as the former stresses variety and the latter, unity; and the truth of unity in variety forms the first principle of *Upaniṣadic* wisdom. Epistemology distinguishes between revelation, reason and realisation and at the same time stresses their organic unity as there can be no verities if they are not verified and verifiable. Ontology refers to the three entities, Brahman, *cit* and *acit* which really refer to Brahman in *cit* and *acit* as their one Self. Cosmology defines Brahman as *tajjalān*<sup>1</sup> and also as the one and only cosmic ground. Psychology describes the eternity and infinity of the *jīvas*, but denies their externality and exclusiveness. Ethics relies on the moral freedom of the self, the similarity and solidarity of all *jīvas* and insists on the need for self-sacrifice and service to all *jīvas*. Religion affords the hope that Brahman the ultimate reality is realisable by all and thus guarantees universal salvation. In this way, the central truth of the above *Upaniṣad* text is expounded by defining the word Brahman as the chief *tattva* or metaphysical ground of the universe, the word *vid* as the *hita* or means of knowing Brahman ethically and spiritually and the words *āpnoti param* as

1. *Ch. Up.*, III. xiv. 1.

the supreme mystic goal of life. Metaphysics, morals and mysticism are synthetically one and Brahman, the metaphysical highest, is also the ethical and intuitional highest. This synthetic view affords a comprehensive insight into the meaning of the texts, bearing on *abheda*, *bheda*, *bhedābheda* and *viśiṣṭaika* and their harmonisation in the light of the intellectual intuition that Brahman is the being of all beings and the ideal in which all the ideals of truth, goodness and beauty are eternally self-realised. With a view to bringing to light the wisdom of the *Upaniṣads* from the synthetic standpoint, this chapter is added.

The wisdom of the *Upaniṣads* is fully appreciated only by the *vidvāns* or *Vedāntins* who have specialised in *Brahmajñāna*. But the *Vedāntic* philosophers disagree in their exposition of the *Upaniṣads*, and a comparative study of each *siddhānta* is of absorbing interest to the student who seeks to discern the common features of the systems and the points of convergence. Each system has its own individuality, claims the sanctity of immemorial tradition or *sampradāya* and also the merit of satisfying the *pramāṇas* of *Śruti*, *yukti* and *anubhava*. Each regards itself as the only philosophy that is true to the spirit of the *Upaniṣads* and fulfils the needs of dialectic thinking and the authority of personal experience (or *Śruti*, *yukti* and *anubhava*). It insists on the necessity for moral and spiritual discipline and the practice of specific *sādhana*s for the attainment of the goal of *mukti*. But the views of *mukti* vary with each school though all of them reach the same negative conclusion that *mukti* is freedom from *avidyā* and *karma* and the sorrows of *samsāra*. Each system has a body of basic philosophical literature which thrives in an atmosphere

of mutual disinterested criticism in the light of certain fundamental principles accepted by all *Vedāntins*. The task of discovering the common features of *Vedānta* is rendered difficult on account of the clear-cut formulations of each school and the exclusive intellectual and social habits cultivated by the followers of each faith in conformity with its tenets. Nevertheless *Vedānta* has a genius for synoptic and coherent thinking and for discerning the unity that is behind difference and discord and it is the faith in this principle that furnishes the motive for this concluding chapter.

The synthetic study of *Vedānta* presupposes certain requisites which are universal and constructive. The chief qualification is the possession of sympathetic insight into the soul of each system for which no rules can be given. It postulates also a first-hand knowledge of the fundamentals of each philosophy freed from the evils of dogmatism and dilettantism. Dogmatism is blind faith in authority leading to fanaticism, and relationism is the justification of each system as a particular standpoint of truth without any finality. The second requisite is a clear and comprehensive grasp of each *darśana* as a speculative system based on a direct intuition of Brahman marking a transition from the metaphysical enquiry into Reality to its spiritual realisation. The third condition relates to the philosophy of values and is an insistence on each system satisfying the highest values of truth, goodness and beauty. The fourth criterion is the cultivation of a sense of proportion or perspective which consists in assigning to each philosophy its rightful place in the synthetic scheme of *Vedānta* as a whole. The foremost qualification of a synoptic thinker should be insight into the meaning and value of each system as expounded by

its best *ācāryas* and illuminated by the lives of its highest exemplars. The chief value of the synthetic method lies in the critical but constructive survey of the best features of each system in the light of a common standard furnished by the *Upaniṣad* itself. As aids to such an understanding the following principles of criticism are employed :

(1) textual consistency ; (2) the historic method ; (3) the psychological and pragmatic methods ; (4) the evolutionary method ; (5) modern synthetic views ; and (6) the method of immanent criticism.

The first method insists on faith in the trustworthiness of the traditional method followed by all *Vedāntic* teachers. This method postulates or posits the truth that the three *prasthānas*, the *Upaniṣads*, the *Gītā* and the *Sūtras* form an integral unity and that they do not maintain divergent views. Brahman is enshrined in the *Upaniṣads* as intuited by the *Rsis* ; the *Sūtras* give a systematic exposition of these intuitions by making them intelligible to the logical intellect and by clarifying apparent inconsistencies in the *Upaniṣads* ; the *Gītā* contains the essentials of these intellectual intuitions, and the three should be considered in their integrity. The *Upaniṣads* no doubt seem to be self-contradictory and confusing when the texts affirm the truths of *bheda*, *abheda*, *bhedābheda*, *aikya* and *viśiṣṭa aikya* and thus lack coherence. They provide ample scope to each *ācārya* to select the relevant texts and deduce his own system in the light of the texts and strain the meaning of other texts to suit his own views. The variety of *Vedāntic* schools formulated in this way is almost exhaustive as the systems deduced from the *Upaniṣads* contain a wide and complete range of philosophic thought. Though every school establishes its own

*siddhānta* by a criticism of rival theories, it claims to follow the synthetic method of the *Sūtras* and arrive at a comprehensive view which reconciles the apparently conflicting texts. Vyāsa, who collected the *Vedas* and co-ordinated the teaching of the *Upaniṣads* in the *Brahma Sūtras* is the very incarnation of the synthetic wisdom contained in Hinduism and he came to fulfil and not to destroy. He is the *Vedāntin* whom the other *Vedāntins* accept as the master of all those that know. The central idea of every *Vedāntic* system is that every kind of knowledge has its consummation in *Upaniṣadic* wisdom and that the *vidvān* who realises Brahman as the All-Self attains the supreme end of life and is ever free from the hardships of *samsāra*.

Secondly, in true history, there is an increasing purpose of spiritual life that runs through the ages, and, though it distinguishes between the ideal and the actual, it does not divide. History does not mete out justice, but simply justifies by placing men and events in proper relation to their environment. It explains all things by revealing their causal sequence, but condemns nothing as it refers to the passage from the good to the better. In the light of this method every *Vedāntic* school is justified, because it is a fact of history. It may be right also on account of the principle that each system is a reflection of the age that produced it. The *Advaita* of Śaṅkara, for example, checked the spreading of the agnostic and nihilistic tendencies of Buddhism that had become pronounced in his age, and he re-established the philosophy of the *Upaniṣads* and to that extent was justified. But the monistic idealism of *Advaita* tended towards subjectivism, which was later on corrected by the philosophy of Bhāskara which denied the reality of

*nirguṇa* Brahman and *jīvanmukti*. But Bhāskara's theory of *ekībhāva* eventually led to the denial of the individual, and this pantheistic tendency was arrested by Yādava who affirmed the equal reality of the *bheda* and *abheda* aspects of life. The schools of *Bhedābheda* did not satisfy the ethical needs of *Vedānta* as they traced every error and evil to the Absolute. This defect was removed by Rāmānuja who attributed every imperfection to the freedom of the finite self and an infinity of perfections to the All-Self or *Paramātmān*. But his idea of God as the *saṁrī* of all beings did not fully meet the requirements of theistic pluralism and therefore Madhva came to establish the philosophy of absolute difference between *jīva* and *Īśvara*. In this way each system may be explained historically as a response to the needs of the age which gave birth to it, but it does not mean that every succeeding system is a new synthesis of conflicting elements in a dialectic way and that *Dvaita* as the last of the series is the fulfilment of all previous theories. The historic view fails to distinguish between 'what is' and 'what ought to be' and we cannot say that 'what has occurred' is consequently good. The main *Vedāntic* systems are in a flourishing condition today and exist side by side peacefully and there is no evidence to show that one system alone is the fittest and best and that other views should be or will be eliminated.

Thirdly, the psychological method of synthesis consists in accounting for the merit of each *darśana* by analysing the mentality of its expositors. This view is crisply expressed by the psychological idea that *matabheda* is invariably determined by *matī-bheda*. The thirty-two *vidyās* mentioned in the *Upaniṣads* and explained at length in the *Sūtras* are optional and the *upāsaka* who

meditates on Brahman may choose any one of them, as the goal is one and the same, namely, the realisation of Brahman. What a man meditates on, that he becomes. The theory of God as *iṣṭa devata* provides for freedom of worship based on temperamental variations and it affords a basis for toleration. Besides, there is the divine assurance in the *Gītā* that whosoever worships God in whatsoever form ultimately attains Him. The starting point of intellectual, volitional and emotional men may differ, but their goal is the same. The chief requisite of the *Advaitic mumukṣu* is *Advaita vāsanā* and that of the other *Vedāntins* is coloured by their temperament and innate disposition. The four *Yogas* known as *Karma Yoga*, *Jñāna Yoga*, *Rāja Yoga* and *Bhakti Yoga* are devised in accordance with the psychological principles based on the aptitude and the nature of the *adhikārin*. The *Advaitin* chooses the way of *jñāna*; the *Viśiṣṭādvaitin* prefers the path of love and the *Dvaitavādin* extols the ideal of service. Since knowledge, feeling and will are variations of the same psychical process, there is no fundamental difference in these attitudes. The psychological method is thus of immense importance in the synthetic study of *Vedānta*, but it labours under an inherent defect. The value of a system is intrinsic and is not determined *ab extra* by psychologically analysing its origin. For example the theory of God as *iṣṭa devata* does not promote devotional fervour and loyalty associated with monotheistic faith; it may lapse into polytheism and the anthropomorphic idea of man making god in his own image. The method of evaluation in the light of an ideal is different from the genetic account. *Vedāntic* experience is transcendental and it cannot be described in terms of empirical psychology.



Fourthly, the evolutionary method adopted by *Advaita* explains the varieties of *Vedāntic* experience as stages in the progressive realisation of *nirguṇa* Brahman. Truth is not the denial of falsity but is a progress from truth to more truth. The test of truth is non-contradiction and is based on the principle of *apaccheda* which proves that what cannot be sublated is alone true. The Absolute is beyond logical and moral distinctions as it transcends relational thought, but there are degrees of truth and goodness and each *darśana* has a place in the hierarchical scheme but is not wholly true or good. The *Naiyāyika*, for example, is on the level of commonsense and therefore occupies the first stage in philosophic endeavour. The *Mīmāṃsaka* is only on the moral and ritualistic stages and even the *Sāṅkhya* who adopts the metaphysical method does not reach the heights of monistic idealism.

The *Dvaita* system deals with external relations and suffers from the self-contradiction of the dualistic consciousness. *Viśiṣṭādvaita* with its theory of internal or organic relations no doubt comes near *Advaita*; but its view of Brahman is moulded on the logical pattern and its theory of *mukti* is liable to be charged with the defect of anthropomorphism. Buddhism with its devastating dialectics brings out the self-discrepancy involved in theism and thought, and leads to *Advaita* as the highest stage of *Brahmajñāna* though it does not prove it. The *Dvaitavādin* adopts the *tu quoque* method, reverses the argument and proves that the illusion theory of *Advaita* is illusory and is allied to Buddhistic nihilism. The history of Indian philosophy reveals, according to him, the progress of *Vedāntic* knowledge from Śaṅkara, Bhāskara, Yādava and Rāmānuja till it becomes

perfect in the *darśana* of Pūrṇaprajña. Rāmānuja discovers a ladder from earth to heaven and points out that *Karma Yoga* and *Jñāna Yoga* lead to *bhakti* and *prapatti* and the *mumukṣu* renounces the pleasures of *prakṛti* and *puruṣa* and attains the bliss of communion with *Puruṣottama*. But the evolutionary method as such has no fixity or finality and *Brahmajñāna* cannot be attained by mere *karma*, *jñāna* or *bhakti*. As the *Upaniṣad* says "whom Brahman chooses, unto him He reveals Himself,"<sup>2</sup> and this is due to divine grace.

Fifthly the synthetic method adopted by neo-*Vedānta* is the method of philosophic criticism unfettered by the rules of textual exposition and faith in fundamentalism or literalism. It denies the divine authority of the *Upaniṣads* and their finality and accepts the view that philosophy is still progressive and that many new pages of Truth are yet to be written. Orthodox Hindu thought is said to be still in the scholastic period, as its main feature lies in the worship of words and empty dialectical disputations; its blind allegiance to *sampradāya* which consists mainly in straining texts to suit preconceived notions tends to destroy intellectual freedom and the spirit of fresh enquiry. But the darkness of such mediaevalistic method is gradually dispelled by the new spirit of renaissance and loyalty to Truth. Truth takes the place of loyalty to dogma and conformity to tradition. A new synthesis of *Vedānta* in the light of philosophic criticism is attempted by modern Indian philosophers, though their solutions are varied and conflicting. One way of harmonising the different schools consists in the application of the monistic principle that

2. *Kāth. Up.*, I. ii. 22.

truth is a passage from the lower to the higher till it becomes self-explanatory. It is the ladder theory that *Dvaita* is in the level of common sense, *Viśiṣṭādvaita* is a higher stage and *Advaita* is the completion of *Vedāntic* knowledge. This triple process is, according to it, discernible even in Christianity as different from churchianity and also in Islam, especially in its Sufi aspect. It is a common sense view of Christianity when its founder prays to the Father in Heaven; the experience of the Kingdom of God within us is a higher stage and Christianity comes to itself when Christ utters the truth of *Advaita*, "I and my Father are one." Other philosophers say that the *Upaniṣads* speak with the double voice of philosophy and religion and that while Rāmānuja is on the theistic level of logical thinking, Śaṅkara is on the high ground of monistic idealism and prefers intuition to the light of logical understanding. Still others reject the ladder theory and hold that the three *darśanas* are different aspects of reality and that there is as much delight in seeing difference as there is in the non-dual experience. Still others reconcile Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja by vivisecting *Vedāntic* experience and assign the intellect to Śaṅkara and the heart to Rāmānuja. The philosophers who apply the historico-critical method to the *Upaniṣads* conclude that their main teaching supports the monistic idealism of Śaṅkara and that the *Sūtras* and the *Gītā* favour the theism of Rāmānuja. The only way of avoiding the confusions resulting from these conflicting opinions is to accept the traditional view of the old *Vedāntins* that the three *prasthānas* form a single authority and teach the same truth. The ladder theory betrays self-complacency, lack of sympathetic insight into non-*Advaitic* systems and refusal to accept their

terms of peace. Finally to deny the eternity and impersonality of the *Upaniṣads* is to seek the dangers of subjectivism and agnosticism.

The traditional *Vedāntic* method avoids all extremes and is a *siddhānta* as well as a synthesis. It is free alike from the dangers of the dogmatic or deductive temper and the hazards of inductive enquiry. It is a middle course between institutional religion and mysticism. The former aims at the standardisation or uniformity of faith and makes it rigid and final but the latter relies on personal conviction and spiritual communion. The mystic with his instinct for the infinite yearns for direct realisation and has an intuition of Brahman. He seeks God intensely by a method of spiritual induction and sees Him face to face and mind to mind, but the *ācārya* formulates this experience in a systematic way and imparts it to others by employing the deductive method. Intuition serves as the first principles of religion and a philosophy or *siddhānta* is deductively developed from them. When philosophy is purely deductive, it becomes a theology with its fixed dogmas, myths and rituals and gradually external coercion takes the place of personal conviction. A *siddhānta* is based on the principle of the Excluded Middle and its truth is established by the rejection of its contradictories. One's own *siddhānta* is true and exclusive and therefore the other *siddhāntas* are false and this is the logic of institutional religion. It is so compelling and coercive that, if it is not accepted logically, it has to be forced on the unbeliever by the use of the big stick or brute force. In the name of uniformity of faith and loyalty to truth institutional religion stifles freedom of thought and intellectual honesty. In its

fanatical zeal it often allies itself with secular power and resorts to the method of persecuting the dissenters who are called unbelievers, heretics and sinners. Mysticism offers a corrective to such bigotry by its insistence on personal experience as the only test of truth. When spirituality is standardised, it dissects the living flow into dead bits and offers stone instead of bread. But, personal religion strikes at the root of organised congregational worship with its own doctrines and rituals. Besides, mystic experiences are often varied and conflicting and have no stability or coherence.

The *Upaniṣads* avoid the extremes of institutionalism and mysticism and follow the middle course. They define spiritual truths as objective revelations which can be verified by personal experiments and experiences. This view guarantees the stability of *śāstraic* faith as well as the spontaneity of religious experiences. It recognises the values of immediate and mediate knowledge as spiritual intuition is justified by philosophic thinking.

The *Upaniṣadic* teachers like Sanatkumāra, Uddālaka, Āruṇi and Varuṇa are knowers of Brahman and in their teaching to their disciples they follow the deductive or *a priori* method. But disciples like Nārada, Śvetaketu and Bhṛḡuvāruni seek Brahman by a process of spiritual induction and finally realise Him. Thus the deductive and inductive methods of the *Upaniṣads* are complementary and not self-contradictory and they steer clear of the dangers of dogmatism and relativism and lead the *mumukṣu* safely to the goal of *Brahmajñāna* or God realisation.

Sixthly and lastly the method of immanent criticism is based on the *Vedāntic* truth that Brahman resides in

all *jīvas* as their inner life, light and love and that every seeker after *mukti* gravitates towards God and attains his security and stability by attaining Brahman. Every *Vedāntic* school insists on the need for renouncing the egoistic and separatist ideas of 'I' and 'mine' or *ahaṅkāra* and *mamakāra* and regaining the unitive consciousness by *Brahmanisation*. The content of *mukti* is so rich and varied that it cannot be defined and described and the only definition that can be given is the experience-definition or *Brahmānubhava*. The *Vedāntic* philosopher, however, seeks to define the indefinable by meditating on Brahman as *satyam*, *jñānam*, *ānandam* and *apahatapāpmatvam*. To apprehend Brahman is also to comprehend His essential nature and since every idea of Brahman refers to Brahman owing to the identity of content or meaning, all the qualities or ideas of Brahman connote Brahman as the ultimate subject. The varieties of *Vedāntic* experience consist mainly of the *Advaitic* idea of *jñāna* or enlightenment, the theistic idea of selfless service to the Redeemer or *Svāmin* and the mystic view of losing oneself in divine love and *ānanda*, and these ideas are of Brahman or Brahman itself. Whether *mukti* is *svarūpa aikya*, *viśiṣṭa aikya* or selfless service to God, it is the *Brahmanised* state of the self by the attainment of the unitive consciousness in *sāyujya*. The more spiritual a man is the more helpful he is to humanity, and in the highest state of *Brahmānubhava* the *mukta* sheds his *ahaṅkāra* or the narrow egoistic outlook, enjoys eternal bliss and peace that passeth all understanding and loses himself in the service of all *jīvas*, human, sub-human and celestial, without any distinction. Brahman not only resides in the hearts of all *jīvas* but is also immanent in all faiths.

In the immortal words of the *Upaniṣads*, *sat* is one though the sages call it variously. The *Gītā* as the cream of the *Upaniṣads* guarantees *Brahmānubhava* to all persons and proclaims the spiritual hospitality of Hinduism in the ever-ringing words "whoso worships me in whatsoever form ultimately reaches me."<sup>3</sup>

3. ye yathā mām prapadyante tāmstathaiva bhajāmyaham !  
mama vartmānuvartante manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ.—*B. G.*, IV. 11.

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